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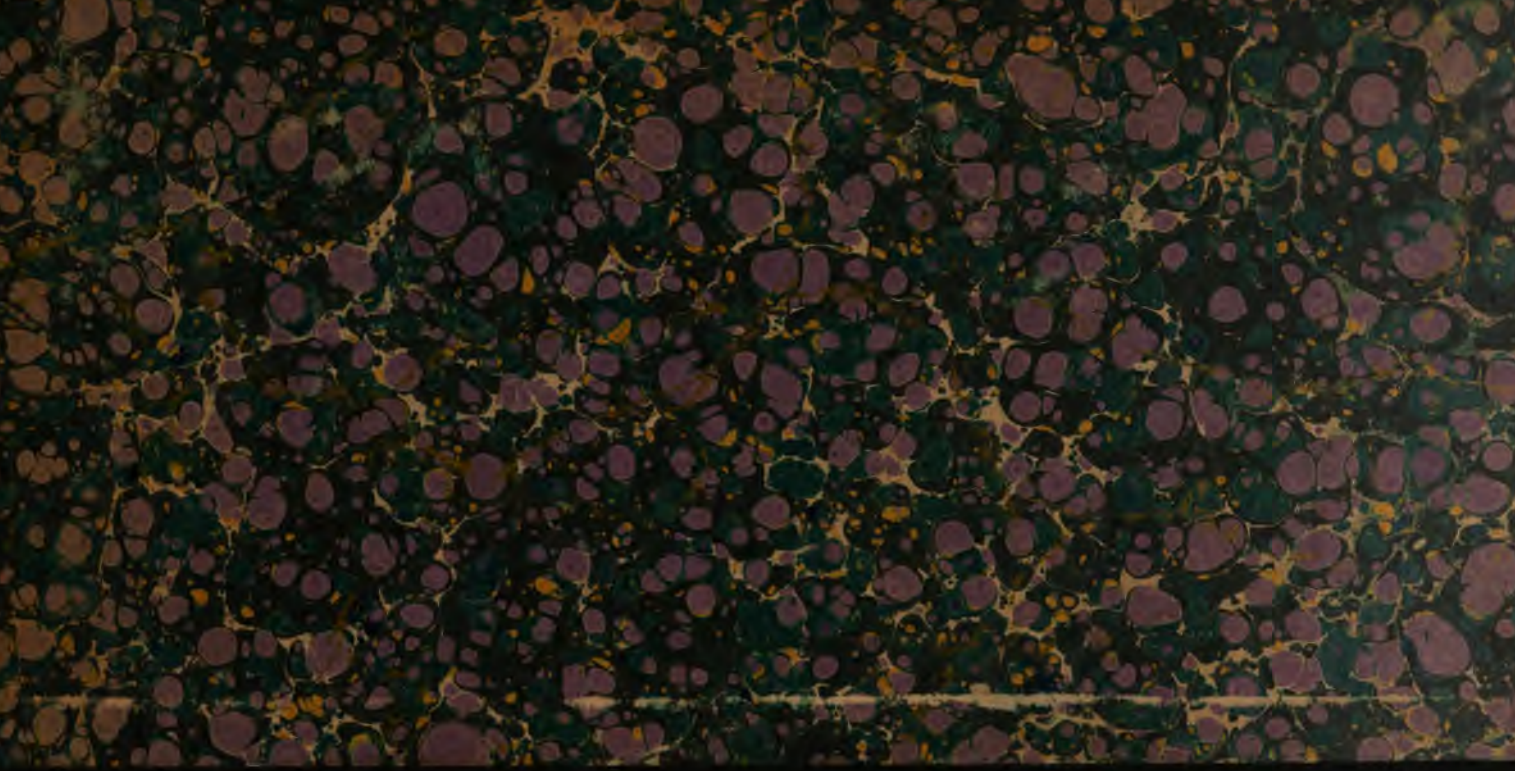

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THE

FOREST AND CHACE

OF

MALVERN,

ITS ANCIENT & PRESENT STATE;

WITH NOTICES OF THE MOST

REMARKABLE OLD TREES

REMAINING WITHIN ITS CONFINES.

BY EDWIN LEES, F.L.S., F.G.S.,

Fellow of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, &c.,

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MALVERN & WORCESTERSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUBS.

(Reprinted from the Transactions of the Malvern Naturalists' Field Club.)

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VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MALVERN AND WORCESTERSHIRE FIELD CLUBS.

"But now I turn
From hills that in the distance die away,
To mark the subject *Chace*;—Trees that just rise
Above the tufted fern in broken line
Of tasteless order, with the banks of earth,
Hedges, enclosures, and the mouldering trunks
Clad in their russet dress, proclaim that man
With sacrilegious hand hath laboured hard
To tame its wild luxuriance."

—*Cottle's Malvern Hills.*

Change has passed upon the country once designated as "Malvern Chace" since its disafforestation in the reign of Charles the 1st, when the "beasts of venery" strayed over its unenclosed woods, and when the neighbouring occupiers of land were compelled under the forest laws to submit to the visitations of stray deer without daring to prevent their trespasses, and a Court sitting at Hanley had jurisdiction over all matters appertaining to the Chace, while the Chief Forester's

axe was at times brought down upon the neck of any unfortunate marauder who could not show good cause for being found within the sacred pale of "the said Chace." But almost to the close of the last century the Chace was a great unenclosed waste, for in the memory of men living but a few years since, a person could have ridden on horseback from Great Malvern to the top of Bredon Hill and found no impediment to his course save only the passage of the Severn, and that could be crossed at Upton Bridge.

It is scarcely possible to form an adequate idea of the appearance of the Forest of Malvern in the early times prior to the Norman Conquest, but at that period the monkish chronicler, William of Malmesbury, mentions it as "a wilderness thick set with trees." Previous to that time the whole country from the hills to the Severn must have been a waste tract, fit only for the lair of wolves* and other savage animals; and in places not covered by trees or underwood, except where a few bare eminences like the Wold Hills contrasted with the gloomy forest scene, was a flat marshy expanse with difficulty explorable by day, and a dangerous extent of immeasurable gloom at night. This tract of land west of the Severn was included in the country of the Silures, but it was probably only visited on hunting forays, for no traces have been discovered of any permanent occupation, and scarcely a single British implement has been anywhere exhumed, nor are memorial stones or sepulchral barrows to be found.† Very

* In the 13th year of the reign of Henry II. three shillings was ordered to be paid to the hunter in Worcestershire who caught the wolves in the Forest; and the said hunter or his successor had similar orders in his favour for wolf-killing, 17th and 27th years of Henry II., and in the 5th year of the reign of King John. *See Nash, Hist. Worcest.*, vol. 1, p. 130. But as late as the reign of Edward I. wolves were numerous in the forests of Worcestershire and the adjacent counties, for Peter Corbet was directed by a special mandate of that monarch to superintend and assist in the destruction of them.

† At Pendock are traces of a dyke that extended across the country towards Corse Lawn *(Cors Lawn, Celtic)*—a boundary probably to British tribes. Except a bronze celt found at Great Malvern more than half a century ago, and a curious cup of rude earthenware discovered buried with burned human bones on the summit of the Worcestershire Beacon, nothing has been hitherto met with in the district to mark the occupation of man in pre-historic times.

few Celtic names remain in the district, and with the exception of Malvern, and perhaps Pendock, all the names of parishes are evidently of Saxon origin. Nor did the Romans mark their presence visibly in the flat country between the Malvern Hills and the Severn, for no decided Roman road crosses the Chace, nor have any Roman remains (a few coins excepted) been found in it except near Upton, where there seems to have been a Camp, or secondary Station, probably to guard the ford across the Severn; and another Roman or rather auxiliary Camp existed at Kempsey, four miles below Worcester, but this was on the eastern bank of the river. The Saxons do not appear to have entirely conquered the country between the Severn and the Wye before the reign of Athelstan, and whether they did much more than divide the Chace into parishes does not clearly appear. Some grants of land were probably made by Saxon kings, and Edward the Confessor exercised that right; but the greater part of the Chace must have been unappropriated, and as forest ground was therefore seized upon by the Norman sovereigns.

The distinction between a Forest and a Chace is, that the former was Royal property, but the latter could be held by a subject. Tanner, alluding to the hermitage here in Edward the Confessor's reign, says it was "in the wild Forest;" and the hills and the country all around their bases for many miles was generally termed a wilderness, and is so called by *William of Malmesbury*. To what extent the Saxon monarchs claimed this tract of country does not clearly appear; but under William the Conqueror it was considered and held to be Royal property, and so continued till it was granted by Edward the First to Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, commonly called the Red Knight, on his marriage with Jean d'Acres, the King's daughter. According to legal technicality, no subject could own a Forest, and therefore the name was altered to

that of Chace. Leland, who wrote temp. Henry VIII., says—"The Chace of Malverne is bigger than either Wire or Feckingham, and occupieth a great part of Malverne Hills. Great Malverne and Little Malverne also is set in the Chace of Malverne. Malverne Chace (as I hear say) is in length in some places twenty miles; but Malverne Chace doeth not occupy all Malverne Hills." Other authors describe it as extending from the river Teme in the north to Cors Forest (now Corse Lawn) in the south, and from the river Severn on the east to the top of Malvern Hill westward.* This last boundary was so indeterminate that the Bishops of Hereford who possessed lands at Mathon and Colwall, and who claimed the western side of the hills for their hunting ground to the summit of the ridge, had a great dispute with the potent Red Earl, which it is said was only ended by a trench being dug along the crest of the hill to divide the possessions of the disputants. This trench still remains very clearly marked on

* In certain depositions by virtue of a Commission taken at Hanley Hall on the 18th June, 32nd of Queen Elizabeth, before Sir John Russell, Knt., and others, and which are printed in Nash's Worcestershire, the boundaries of the Chace as practically understood thus appear. Henry Dingley deposed that, "He being one of the riders of the said Chace, did ride in circuit from a cross called the Cross in North-end Green, in the manor of Hanley Castle, unto the Cliffy Wood, near Severn side thereon, from thence to Eighteen holders in Powick, thence unto Bransford Bridge, so to the Link. And the keeper of the said wood called the Cliffy Wood, did ride then with this deponent and others unto the Shewstone. He did also ride from a place called the Sweet Oaks unto Welland parish; so by Castle Morton, then to Birch Morton, to divers houses, to the Berrow and Keysend; then to Oxbrummel Pool. All which parishes with others are in the precincts of the Chace of Malvern." John Browne, of Malvern Magna, yeoman, aged 74, being sworn, deposed that he had known the Chace of Malvern these sixty years. "This deponent saith, that these parishes and hamlets have been and are always reputed to be within the liberties and precincts of the Chace:—viz., Castle Morton, Birch Morton, the Berrow, Bromsberrow, Malvern Parva, Malvern Magna, part of Ligh called Hawsell; Mathon, and Callow within the county of Hereford are likewise within the said precinct." It is rather curious that Hanley, Powick, and Longdon, certainly within the limits of the Chace as well as Welland, are here left out. Bushley and Pendock seem never to have been included strictly in the Chace, being probably ancient grants belonging to the church. The inhabitants of Hanley seem to have had peculiar privileges, as in a "Memorandum of the ancient liberties, customs, &c., of the Lordship and franchise of Handley," given by Nash from a MS. in the possession of the Lechmere family, it is said:—"Item the tenants and inhabitants of Handley may common with their cattle from a certain place called Maysmore Bridge in the county of Gloucester unto Powick's Bridge and Bransford Bridge in the county of Worcester, as by way of straying and going out of the said Lordship."

the hills in several places, and is particularly evident on the Worcestershire Beacon.

There is some confusion in writers on the history of the Chace of Malvern, as to the occasion on which this trench was made, though it was clearly meant as a boundary line. Chambers (copying I presume from Dr. Nash) states, that the ditch was made to "divide the possessions of the *Bishop of Hereford* from the Chace, and to limit the two counties." This would obviously appear to be correct; but Dr. Thomas, whose version of the matter I have given further on, says that the trench had been made "to the damage of the CHURCH OF WORCESTER, and hence the controversy" on the subject between the Red Earl and Bishop Godfrey Giffard.*

Dr. Thomas, I presume on documentary evidence, proceeds to give his account of the transaction as follows:—"On the eve of the Lady Day, 1289-90, there was a Court held by the King at Feckenham, and enquiries made throughout the whole county, who had transgressed in hunting in that Forest,

* There appears to have been distinct disputes between Thomas de Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, and Earl de Clare, and Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, and the same earl. The first dispute commenced in 1278, and seems to have been litigated for some years; this was as to the boundary of the Chace westward, and it is stated in Magna Britannia that judges were appointed to view the lands in debate, who held a Court in the Chace, but there is no account how they determined the matter. Some compromise was probably agreed to, for according to Dr. Thomas, "the admirable ditch," so lauded by various writers, was formed A.D. 1287 as a boundary to Earl Gilbert's possessions, yet Colwall and Mathon remained as members of Malvern Chace with privileges for the commoners and inhabitants. At first sight it does not appear what injury the great ditch could do to Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, unless he had lands in Mathon, yet in the Latin charter printed by Dr. Thomas from the original, the ground of complaint is thus stated:—"videlicet de uno fossato levato per nos comitem et Johannam in summitate montis Malverne, *super terram dicti episcopi, ad nocumentum et dampnum ejusdem episcopi.*" The trench was on land within the diocese of Worcester, and the trench had been made evidently without the Bishop's licence, which in those superstitious times might be considered necessary, and some nominal right claimed by the punctilious prelate, which he thus gives up for two bucks and two does as an annual acknowledgment:—"Dedimus etiam et concessimus" both for the prior and church of Worcester, "et pro nobis et successoribus nostris, omnes terras et tenementa cum juribus et pertenentiis suis que *extra fossatum illud et eidem fossato contigua versus comitatum Hereford habuimus*, prefatis comiti et comitisse, et heredibus et assignatis suis; et omnino de cetero quietum clamamus eisdem, pro nobis et successoribus nostris, et priore et capitulo, ad ecclesia nostra Wygorniensi in perpetuum." So at last the ditch with the Bishop's blessing was permitted to rest in peace, and the haunches of venison no doubt duly appeared at the episcopal table while the Chace existed and its deer remained.

and many were imprisoned, and others that were indicted for the same found six sureties for their appearance before the King at Wodestoke on the nones of April, to hear his sentence of mercy or judgement, and because there was no other equity but the King's will, the Bishop's (of Worcester) redemption was taxed at five hundred marks, and the Prior's at two hundred. About this time he (Godfrey Giffard) had a controversy with Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, and Jean his wife," &c.*

The Bishops of Norman times appear to have taken as much interest in hunting affairs as the Barons; for the Bishop of Worcester made a claim to land within this Forest, and in the 8th year of Richard I., John de Constantiis, then Bishop, had liberty granted him "to assart† in his own wood in the Forest of Malverne, near to the Mill of Wentland, three hundred acres of land for the use of the Church of St. Mary at Worcester, to hold to him and his successors for ever, and to do herewith what they would free from all exactions of the Foresters." The dispute that ensued between the then Bishop of Worcester (Godfrey Giffard) and the Earl, as to the formation of the great ditch before alluded to, was ended after long contention, by the mediation of Robert Burnel, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and it was agreed that the Earl and his Countess should pay yearly to the Bishop and his successors a brace of bucks and a brace of

* Surv. Worcest. Cath., 4to, pp. 148-9.

† To assart (from the old French word *assarter* to grub up), was a curious custom of allowing the Church and certain favoured individuals the privilege of cultivating portions of land *within the Forest*, and holding them for a time without paying any rent for the same. The *assarter* after the trees on the land alloted him had been cut down, grubbed up the stumps, and made the land arable as long as it was worth cultivating without the application of manure. After that it was abandoned and left to become Forest land again, and other ground was assarted. This may account for traces of the plough where the ground has been undisturbed in the memory of man. I presume that some of the parties who obtained a grant of Assart on the edge of the Chace, on some pretence or other not only *assarted it*, but never let it get within the Forest pale again; for in some late sales by auction of estates about Malvern the term "Assart lands" is introduced, as distinguishing certain plots—probably cribbed from the Chace.

does out of the Chace of Malvern, at his Palace of Kemsey:* and in the vacancy of the see the same to be paid to the Prior and Convent of Worcester, demanding them by their attorney at the Castle of Hanley, which agreement was afterwards confirmed by King Edward I., at Norham, in the 19th year of his reign. This dispute with Bishop Godfrey Giffard† occurring with the Red Earl, was after the making of the famous trench on the hill, and indeed Dr. Thomas, in his "Antiquities of Great Malvern Priory," distinctly says that the trench was made by Gilbert Earl of Gloucester, because the beasts of the wood (deer, &c.,) frequently crossed the hills from Worcestershire into Herefordshire, and did not return.‡ Further on he states that a dispute arose between Thomas de Cantelupe, Bishop of Hereford, and Earl Gilbert and his son Thomas, as to the rights of the former in respect to the limits of his Chace; and then he states the trench was made as a boundary between their possessions. If the trench was originally no deeper than it is now, it could have been of little use except as a nominal boundary, unless paling was superadded. But the documents that Dr. Nash has printed in his History of Worcestershire, under Hanley Castle, show that there was a

* Whatever "damage to the Bishop and his Church," as Dr. Thomas puts it, the proceedings of Earl Gilbert de Clare as to his famous trench or otherwise was likely to have effected, the compensation made as a *solatium* was literally this, viz., that the Bishop and his successors should have two good bucks, "*tempore pinguedinis*," on the Eve of the Assumption, and two good does, "*tempore fermissionis*," on Christmas Eve, out of the Chace of Malvern, yearly at the Bishop's manor of Kempsey, by the delivery of the Earl and Countess, and for want of payment the same to be doubled *toties quoties*, and distress taken of the goods of the said Earl; the same in the vacancy of the see to be delivered to the Prior and Convent of Worcester, upon demand made by their attorney at the gate of the Earl's Castle of Hanley, to be delivered by his constable there. Such was the pertinacity with which Godfrey Giffard insisted upon his presumed rights, and the formality with which compensation was alloted to him.—*See the original Latin Charter in Dr. Thomas's Antiq. Prior. Maj. Malv., p.* 159.

† This prelate was very tenacious of his assumed rights, and pressed them to the utmost, for Dr. Nash mentions that he had a dispute with William Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, as to the Warren on Bredon Hill. *See Nash, Hist. Worcest.*, vol. 1, p. 130.

‡ "Quia bestiæ sylvæ transeuntes terminos Herefordenses frequenter ibant, et non revertebantur, Gilbertus comes Gloucestriæ super Malverniæ montes fossatum fecit."—Thomas, *Antiq. prior. maj. Malv.*, 8vo, p. ci.

"shire ditch," which must have existed prior to the Gloucester ditch; and the latter could have extended no farther along the hills than the boundaries of Colwall, where the Bishops of Hereford had a country residence, relics of which yet remain. Indeed it seems most likely that the formation of the ditch with its palisades by the Red Earl stopping the deer from straying into Herefordshire, was the grievance the sport-loving prelate of the see of Hereford complained of. It is, however, rather curious that by a regulation "made by the Law-day and Court of Hanley, there holden the 23rd day of June, in the 31st of Henry VIII., 1540," it was ordered "that none of the inhabitants of Coldwall or Mathon do from henceforth staff-drive any kind of their cattle into the Chace further than the shire-ditch, after the old custom, on pain of 20 shillings. And that none of the said inhabitants do cross any of the chace-wood growing on this side of the shire-ditch, over the hill, upon payment of 20 shillings." This seems like a revival of the old dispute between the Red Earl and the Bishop of Hereford, and suggests that this "shire-ditch" and the trench called after the Earl of Gloucester were identical. Possibly the Earl only widened and deepened the old shire-ditch so that, as Camden says, it was "still to be seen with admiration."

Reginald Brian, who was translated to the see of Worcester in 1352, appears to have been a very keen sportsman, and likely enough hunted in the Chace of Malvern. In an extant MS. epistle of his addressed to the Bishop of St. David's,* he reminds his brother prelate of a promise which he had made to send him six brace of excellent hunting dogs, the best (the reverend sportsman confesses) that he had ever seen; of these, "Reginald, by divine permission Bishop of Worcester," says, that he had been in daily anxious expectation; and he declares that his heart languished for their

* Quoted in Daniel's "Rural Sports," 8vo.

arrival. "Let them come, then," he entreats, "O reverend father, without delay; let my woods re-echo with the music of their cry and the cheerful notes of the horn; and let the walls of my palace be decorated with the trophies of the chace." Truly Reginald Brian was a jolly sportsman, and perhaps not the worse ecclesiastic as customs and recreations then prevailed. The inferior clergy of those days perhaps loved hunting as well as the Bishops, for by Act of Parliament in the reign of Richard II., all priests or clerks, whose benefices are not of the yearly value of ten pounds, are prohibited from keeping any greyhound or other dog for hunting, or using engines for destroying deer, hares, or other game, under pain of a year's imprisonment.

Malvern Chace had its peculiar laws and customs, even after it became the property of a subject, and "the Foresters" had very considerable power within its limits, extending even to judicial functions. It is stated in documents given in the appendix to the Forests, in Nash's Worcestershire, that the Foresters only had authority to arrest every felon for felony and murder "found within the said Chace," and they were to bring him before the chief Forester, who held of the chief lord in fee by a certain rent of an axe and an horn; and he had power to sit in judgment on the said felonies and murders, as also to execute the office of coroner, and if the persons tried were found guilty by a verdict of twelve men thereupon charged and sworn, of the four next townships adjoining unto the place where the said felony and murder was done, his head was to be struck off with the Forester's axe at a place called Sweet Oaks within the said Chace, where they always sat in judgment on such persons, and the body was to be carried unto the height of Malvern Hill unto a place called Baldeyate, and there to be hanged on a gallows and so to remain, unless license was granted

by the chief Forester to take it down.* It does not appear that "the chief Forester" was bound to be learned in the law, and perhaps a poor fellow obnoxious to the chief or any other Forester, if "found within the said Chace," might have had but scant justice alloted to him, and his head be placed in unpleasant proximity to the Forester's axe. With regard to persons hunting unlawfully, or poaching in the Chace, it is recorded that—"if any of the Foresters find any person or persons hunting within the said Chace, or bounds thereof, or standing suspiciously, viz.: stable-standing, with hounds drawing, or bloody hands, the same Forester shall attach him or them, and bring them into the Castle of Handley, there to remain prisoners in a place called Banbury Chamber, until they have found sureties of their good harbouring against the game by obligation in C shillings to the lord's use, to be levied upon the forfeiture of them or their surety."† One hundred shillings was rather a large fine for trespassing in search of game, and of course "homble-pie"—if indeed any pie was allowed—would be the diet alloted to prisoners in the "Banbury Chamber," not in all probability very comfortably fitted up.

The lord of the Lordship of Hanley was the chief lord of this Chace, and of all the royalties of it, and appointed the constable of the Castle of Hanley, the parker of Blackmore, the steward, the bailiff, the master of the game, four foresters, and a ranger, to hold once in the year a lord day and a court baron; and every three weeks to determine all manner of pleas and trespasses, debts, or detainer, which

* The document printed in Nash's Worcestershire, in his appendix to the account of the Forests, says—"Which power of judgment extendeth from Charney's Pool upon the south part unto Gowelyate upon the north part, and in breadth from Rodeway unto the height of Malvern-hill."

† *From a Memorandum "On the antient liberties, royalty, and customs belonging to the lordship and franchise of Handley, and unto the Chase of Malvern,"* in Nash's Hist. Worcester, printed from a document in possession of the Lechmere family, and preserved among their muniments.

exceeded not the value of forty shillings. To this court besides the homage and customary tenants thereof, were "free suitors," the Abbot of Westminster, the Abbot of Pershore, the Prior of Much Malverne, the Prior of Little Malverne, the Lord Clifford for the Lordship of Stoke-upon-Severn, the Lord of Madresfeyld, the Lord of Bromsberrow, and the Lord of Byrtes-Morton.* Within the Lordship of Hanley, no sheriff, or eschaetor, or any foreign officer had any power whatever, but the bailiff of Hanley was to execute and serve all precepts, and to return the same at his jeopardy; and as for the peace, no warrant from justices was to be obeyed or executed there by any foreign officer, for as much as the constables of the said Lordship of Hanley were to sue and arrest the parties named in the said warrant; and the said parties to commit to ward; the constable of the Castle of Hanley had also power of sitting in judgment on felony and murder, and of executing the office of a coroner within the franchise of Hanley; and the person accused was to be brought before the steward at Hanley and there interdicted, and, if found guilty, he was to be executed at a certain place called Rydde Green.

Attached to the Chace were also certain Verdurers, Viewers, and Riders, which by their tenure and holding of land had power to ride and perambulate the ground, soil, and townships of every lord, from Charmey's Pool upon the south unto Powyke Bridge and Braunceford Bridge, to oversee the highways and watercourses, and to take care that the wood hedges adjoining to the Chace be lawfully made for the preservation of the deer. The Viewers and Riders were also to look to "the hombling of the dogs," and to have the oversight and correction thereof twice every seven years, and such manner of dogs as were found unlawful, that is to say, as could not be drawn through a certain sterop of eighteen inches and a

* These personages were all owners of lands within the boundaries of the Chace, but held them subject to the Forest laws.

barleycorn in length and breadth compass, the farther joints of the two middle claws were to be cut clean away, and the master and owner of the dogs were to be amerced 3s. 1d.*

The chief Forester, who was generally a gentleman of position, had various fees assigned to him, as "crops of all the oaks," any excess of "the mast" in autumn beyond what was required for the commoners' pigs, the "windfall wood," the "3d penny of attachments made in the Chace," and the "3d penny of all felons' goods and forfeitures within the Chace." Every commoner might fall "what wood pleaseth him upon attachment,"—the attachment not to exceed the value of the wood, and "the Forester may lawfully follow the commoner with his wain unto his own house and attach him there; if he may come to put his bow betwixt the foremost oxen and the gate-post of his house." The commoners and inhabitants in and about the Chace were to give notice to the foresters of any deer coming upon their premises, but they were on no account to kill, molest, or disturb them, under penalty of answering for the same at the Court of Hanley, with "homble pie" in prospect. The commoners, however, were entitled to put their pigs into the Chace in autumn to feed upon the acorns from the oaks, and if it appeared that there was more mast than the commoners' hogs would consume, the public crier was to announce the fact in the neighbouring towns, and the surplus mast was to be sold for the benefit of the lord, a portion going, of course, to the chief Forester.

All these particulars, laws, usages, and customs passed

* This "hombling of the dogs," no very pleasant process to them, was most probably the origin of that "humble pie," which like the Persian dirt those persons are said to eat who have rashly or foolishly got into an unpleasant predicament, and back out ignominiously. It has been generally said that homble-pie was a dish made from the entrails of deer, and only served to those who sat at the lower end of the great table in the hall in "the good old times." Yet even a pie of this description might be well partaken of by a man "hungry as a hunter" with no bad relish; but the cutting clean away of the joints of those dogs' claws "found unlawful" was rather sharp practice, and more likely to lead to the proverbial expression that got into common use than the actual pie, which if not placed on the head table, was probably not bad in itself. The expression implies a forced humiliation, which it certainly was to the poor dog.

away when the Chace was disafforested in 1632, and there only remains what was reserved by a decree of Chancery, and the order in Council explaining it, made at Whitehall, 5th September, 1632, by which after confirming the grant by the King of his third part of the Chace to Sir Nicholas Vermuyden, it is declared that the other two parts shall be *left open and free* for the freeholders and tenants and commoners to take their common of pasture and common of estovers therein; * with the restriction that *no enclosure shall be made,* or woods and trees felled *within the two-third parts subject to right of common.*†

These reserved rights still remain where not altered by modern enclosure-acts, and the rights of the commoners still appertain to all the waste within the extensive parish of Great Malvern. So that in the sale or grant of any waste land for public or private purposes, the commoners may demand compensation; and in a recent railway case when the Hereford Railway was made they obtained it, the money valuation of their abstracted rights being now deposited at exchequer interest in the Worcester Old Bank.

The deer of the Chace were probably all destroyed at its disafforestation, for nothing further is anywhere mentioned about them, and none appear to have been preserved in the paddocks of country gentlemen. If any stray ones remained, doubtless in the lawless time of "the great rebellion" they were finished up without remorse. Neither, as far as I know, has any account been left, in story or ballad, of the exploits of the Foresters, Verdurers, and Free Suitors, in their forays

* After the disafforestation of the Chace various disputes arose as to rights of common upon it, and it was at last finally decided that, "The parishes reputed to be within the liberties and precincts of Malvern Chace were—the parish of Hanley Castle, a parcel of Upton-upon-Severn, the parish of Welland, part of Longdon, Castle Morton, Birt *alias* Birch Morton, the Berrow, Bromsberrow, Malvern Parva, Malvern Magna, part of Leigh called Hawswell, Mathon, all in Worcestershire except Bromsberrow in Gloucestershire, and Colwall in the county of Hereford."

† See the Act of Parliament recited at length in Nash's Worcest.—*Appendix to the Forests.*

and huntings after the deer, or the record left of any "Merrie men" who might have furtively sought after a fat buck; or any caitiff prowler who by "the verdict of twelve men" found his head placed under the Forester's axe, "in the said chace" at Sweet Oaks, "where they always sat in judgment on such persons." It can scarcely be doubted, however, that deer-stealing was an old custom, as approved within the Chace of Malvern by the Robin Hoods of Worcestershire, as in "Merry Sherwood," and other Royal Forests. It is in fact recorded that Hugh le Despencer, Chief Justice of Feckenham Forest, held a Court at the Commandery in Worcester, in May, 1300, "to impose fines on the destroyers of the King's game." It is possible, indeed, that the sharp axe of the Forester frightened marauders from the Chace at Malvern. At one time the deer must have been numerous, as they are thus mentioned in an old devotional song, supposed to have been composed by a former Vicar of Malvern, about the year 1610:—

"A chace for Royal deer
Round doth beset thee;
Too many do I fear
For aught they get thee;
Yet, tho' they eat away
Thy corn, thy grass, thy hay;
Do not forget, I say,
To praise the Lord.

"The noble chace doth give
Thy beasts their feeding,
Where they in summer live
With little heeding;
Thy sheep and swine there go,
So doth thy horse also,
Till winter brings in snow,
Then praise the Lord."

The homage-tenants and commoners living on the borders of the Chace were not privileged to take or kill any of the deer there abiding, even if they trespassed upon their homesteads; but then they had the run of the open parts of the Chace for their live stock in the summer season, and other rights of "estover," loppings of wood, &c. I should hardly dare assert that a joint of venison did not occasionally get into some of the homage-tenants houses, for deer stealing, as

Shakespeare's history shows, was then considered rather a jolly, if illicit pastime; and the bow did not give such an alarm in its discharge as the gun. There were serious riots by the country people (countenanced too by several landed proprietors) when the Chace was first disafforested and partially enclosed, and this seems to imply a disorderly population resident thereabout, not particularly moral in their habits, and who disliked the impending changes which would interfere with their unlicensed pilferings, and restrain their pursuits. Even late in the present century, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests gave orders for the destruction of all the deer in the Forest of Dean, from the temptation they presented to the labouring population to kill them whenever they could, and the immorality and crime that prevailed while they were preserved in the woods and coverts.

Nothing is stated with certainty as to the ownership of the Forest or Wilderness of Malvern before the reign of Edward I., who granted it as Royal property to Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, and it was henceforth called a Chace. The second Gilbert de Clare married Maude, daughter of John de Burgh, when the Chaces of Malvern and Cors, with the Castle and Manor of Hanley, were assigned her as a dower; but the Earl being killed in the Scottish war, and having no children by Maude, these possessions went after his death to his sisters, as his heirs, and the eldest, who married Hugh le Despencer the younger, brought them with other possessions into the Despencer family, where they remained till in the third generation, then passing by marriage to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, a renowned general in the reign of Henry V., who was killed in the French wars. His son, Henry Beauchamp, created Duke of Warwick by Henry VI., died aged only 22, at Hanley Castle, and was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey. His estates and Malvern Chace among them, as he died without issue, passed to his only sister and heiress, Ann, married to the celebrated Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury,

the "king-maker," who leaving two daughters, his large estates were, as heiresses, divided between them. One was matched to the unfortunate Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI. and Queen Margaret, murdered after the fight at Tewkesbury. She was married afterwards to King Richard III., but had no issue. The other became the wife of George, Duke of Clarence, who left one son. This son and heir was beheaded in the Tower on pretence of conspiracy by order of Henry VII., who then seized upon all young Warwick's possessions, including the Castle and Manor of Hanley, the parks of Blackmore, Hanley, and Cliffey, all lying in the bosom of the Chace, together with the market town of Upton-upon-Severn; and so these possessions thus unjustly obtained by Henry remained Crown lands till about the year 1630, when King Charles I., on certain conditions, granted one-third part of the Forest or Chace of Malvern to Sir Robert Heath, then Attorney-General, and Sir Cornelius Vermuyden. In the meantime many rights or claims of right had arisen by grant or long usages in the lapse of several centuries, and when the grantees began to enclose the Chace the commoners and other persons interested disputed their right to do so, and several riots and disturbances took place in consequence. Nevertheless a decree was issued in 1632 for the "disafforestation of the Chace of Malvern, and for freeing the lands within the bounds, limits, and jurisdictions thereof, of and from the game of deer there and the forest laws." By this decree (to obviate all disputes) one-third part only was to be severed and divided by commissioners, but the other two parts "shall remain and continue unto and amongst the commoners, and be held by them according to their several rights and interests, discharged and freed from his Majesty's game of deer there, and of and from the forest laws, and the liberties and franchises of Forest and Chace, in such sort as by the said decree it doth and may appear."*

* See the document as printed at full length in the Appendix to Dr. Nash's account of Worcestershire Forests, in his History of Worcestershire, folio, vol. i. under Forests.

But besides the tenants and commoners, several powerful landowners, with rights or claims upon the Chace, opposed the execution of this decree, and Sir Thomas Russell, John Hornihold, Esquire, and others, presented a bill in Chancery praying its reversal; while in the meantime, William Noye, Attorney-General, exhibited an information in the Court of Star Chamber against Sir Thomas Russell, Knight, Sir William Russell, Bart., and others, "for certain riots and other misdemeanours supposed to have been done in opposition and hindrance of the execution of the said decree."

To end the dispute an order in Council was made at Whitehall, 5th September, 1632, to explain the former decree, and for "the settlement of the differences" that had disturbed the country. By this it is declared that the third part to be enclosed should not be the best selected, but "indifferently taken, bad and good," and that "the other two parts shall be *left open and free* for the freeholders and tenants and commons, to take their common of pasture and common of Estovers therein;" with the restriction that *no enclosure shall be made,* or woods or trees felled within the two reserved third parts. This "order of explanation" was to be held as part of the said decree, and still remains in force (being afterwards confirmed by Act of Parliament 16th Charles II.) as to such waste lands in the parishes of the Chace that have not become subject to enclosure acts, or been alloted according to the claims made before the enclosure commissioners. But I believe only Castle-Morton, Great Malvern, Colwall, and Mathon are now left exempt from later acts and orders of enclosure, so it behoves the freeholders and commoners of Great Malvern especially to see that they are *not despoiled of their rights, which are yearly lessening.*

It appears that John Hornihold, Esq., of Blackmore Park, had at that time, whether from ancient grant or otherwise is not stated, certain rights called "Rent Oats" and "Rent Hens,"

payable to him by some of the inhabitants of Malvern and Mathon; and so the decree, it is declared shall not be construed or taken to extend to debar the said John Hornihold, his heirs or assigns, for "or concerning his or their Rent Hens, heretofore to him due, or payable by and from any of the inhabitants of Much Malvern and Mathon, in the said county of Worcester, and of Colwall in the county of Hereford, but that the same Rent Oats and Rent Hens shall, and may be and continue yearly due and payable to him, the said John Hornihold, his heirs and assigns, as in his or their former right, and as if the said decree or disafforestation, or discharging the said Forest or Chace had never been." This decree, made in the eighth year of the reign of Charles I., was afterwards *ratified and confirmed by Act of Parliament 16th Charles II.*, most of the King's third part being then by "mean conveyances" passed into the hands of Sir Nicholas Strode, of the Inner Temple, Knight; and what was in Herefordshire being then in the hands of John Birch and William Thackwell, gentlemen. The right of common here reserved was maintained by several trials of law, as appertaining to thirteen parishes within or bordering upon the ancient Chace; but encroachments and later enclosure acts, as well as the application of the late general enclosure act, has left the decree almost inoperative, except as to the waste within the parish of Great Malvern.*

The Author of "Reflections relating to Malvern Hills," published in 1814,† gives the following imaginative picture of

* It is somewhat curious that a dispute has lately arisen as to the ownership of the summit of the Worcestershire Beacon, which might be presumed as within the parish of Great Malvern, and certainly within the bounds of the Chace, and subject to the decree by which and the subsequent Act of Parliament it was disafforested. Not long since it was proposed by Mr. Bazalgette and other gentlemen interested as visitors in the attractions of Malvern, to erect a Prospect-table on the summit of the hill, with a telescope and appendages for marking every object in the distant landscape, but rival claims to the ground prevented the project being carried out. Mr. Barneby claimed for Lady Emily Foley, as Lady of the Manor of Malvern; and on behalf of Mr. Hornihold, it was alleged that it had been purchased as included in the King's third part. If not, however, the ground would be subject to the rights of the commoners; but the matter remains at present undecided.

† The Rev. E. M. Rudd, late of Kempsey.

Malvern life in the purlieus of the Chace at the beginning of the thirteenth century:—"I sometimes go back, in imagination, to the state of things at Malvern many centuries ago. I see beneath these Hills, instead of this diversified cheerful scene of cultivation, a vast straggling Forest, interspersed with heathy pastures with much fewer dwellings visible, chiefly huts and cottages, and here and there a great man's castle bosomed in trees; the wide forest scene having a rich and noble but more lonely aspect. Archers at a distance appear and disappear among the trees traversing the Chace in quest of deer. Solitude, nevertheless, strongly characterises the scene. I have before me the grey Gothic Abbey, and its various conventual buildings. Its bell sounds among the rocks. Cowled monks walk among the thick alder clumps by the stream below. Some are setting out on a spiritual visit to the peasants or to the household of a neighbouring Baron or Knight, others of the lay brethren return with water from St. Ann's or the Holy Well, two miles distant. Some are here upon the Hills—perhaps returning from a visit to the Hermitage. One sits reading among jutted rocks and tangled bushes; and two or three are above, near the summit, looking down on the expanse below." This is a pretty picture enough, but when it is considered that in monasteries all things were done by rule, and subjection to strict discipline constantly enforced, we can scarcely believe that the monks had that contemplative liberty here supposed, and in fact the numerous services in the monastery would not allow of it. There was a regulation at Little Malvern Priory, that the monks there should go out only *two together*, which implies a suspicion beyond spiritual thought or poetical contemplation.

If we now turn to regard the size of Malvern Chace as at present enclosed and cultivated, we shall find but few extensive commons or wastes left within it, and fewer still vestiges of real forest ground. In the present state of the country, when

enclosure has done almost all it can, with barren ground converted into green meadows and cultivated fields that now meet the view almost everywhere between the Hills and the Severn, it is scarcely possible to realise the Forest scenes of the British and Saxon times. Little, if any of the original "Forest" as understood by the term, now remains, for the few woods that have been suffered to exist, merely allowed to form bushy underwood that is felled every seven years, or permitted to raise thin and lank hop-poles, give but a very inadequate idea of the sylvan aspect of olden times. Every year, too, diminishes these limited woodlands, which are lessened by grubbing up and made arable, and it would be difficult at present to find many old forest veterans that existed when the Clares and Despencers, or later still, the Beauchamps and Nevilles, held their court at Hanley Castle.*

But although individual trees of great size and age are of rare occurrence, yet some woodlands that have been such from the earliest times yet remain, and this is especially the case where yews and hollies grow, darkening the ground with sylvan gloom at all times. In the parish of Powick, about the Berrow, as well as in various parts of Colwall and Mathon, there are antient woods sufficiently embowered in foliage to reveal the picture Lucan has drawn in Druidical times—

> "Where in deep horror had for ages stood
> A dark unviolated sacred wood;"

for notwithstanding the various enclosures of late years that have reduced the once extensive Chace of Malvern to a comparatively narrow compass except in name, secluded spots still

* Of this castle, once so important a feature in the Chace, scarcely a vestige remains, except three sides of the wide moat that encompassed it, the area now forming a garden attached to the modern though handsome farm-house on its north side, tenanted by Mr. Gee, under J. Vincent Hornihold, Esq., the representative of an old family long resident at Blackmoor Park, and connected with the old forest, its laws and customs. The last feudal resident at Hanley Castle was Henry, Duke of Warwick, who died there in the reign of Henry VI., and after the property was confiscated to the Crown, keepers of the castle suffered it to become dilapidated, till unoccupied it was destroyed piecemeal. Leland speaks of it as "defaced" in his day (temp. Hen. VIII.), and not even a ruined tower is now left to sketch or moralise upon.

exist environed with trees and bushes, almost as lonely, solitary, and deserted, as when through uninhabited wastes the chief Forester galloped about with his axe the dread of prowling caitiffs, or yeoman prickers moved merrily along to rouse the stag from his lair in the ferny hollow. About the eastern base of the Herefordshire Beacon, and on either side of the Ragged Stone and Casend Hills more to the south, are dingles leafy as "Merry Sherwood" ever beheld; the dense woods upon the Hollybush Hill are as solemn as old hollies and sombre evergreen yew-trees can make them, while Castle Morton common still shows a wide, green expanse, with here and there a pool, where the lovers of hunting may follow harriers and fox-hounds, if the chase of nobler animals than hares and foxes can now be no longer taken.

A short time since, in an excursion to the Hollybush Hill, I passed through a large pasture beyond the Brick Barns Farmhouse, the name showing a posterior date to the old forest time when all barns hereabout were constructed of wood. In this pasture, which had several oak trees scattered over it, was a beautiful sequestered pond, embowered in wide branching oaks and ash trees, and which had probably remained undisturbed in its obscurity for centuries. Here the forest deer had slaked their thirst before the Norman Conquest, and thus it had remained after the deer had been destroyed and the forest enclosed. The country of olden times yet remains pictured around the borders of these retired and untouched pools, which are like artistic sketches made by a master hand. The shallow end of the pond, where the cattle made use of it, was covered with duck-weed; but the farther part under a steep embowered bank was black as Erebus, and seemed dedicated to pitchy night. It lay still and dark, for scarcely though the sunbeams contrived to penetrate through the thick foliage upon the water, could the reflection of the branches be at all seen. At this time dead leaves strewed the

surface of the ebon water, and more were continually added with every gust of wind. The only sign of life upon this silent and secluded pool was, where a gleam of wandering light called up a circling band of the little burnished water-flea *(Gyrinus natator)*, which, for the few minutes that the sunbeam glanced, moved merrily about.

Bordering upon Castle Morton common is another solemn thicket-surrounded pool no doubt of long antiquity, for it bears the name of Danemoor, and is not far from the extensive castrametation surrounding Midsummer and part of the Hollybush Hills. On one occasion, when I was beside it, a brood of wild-ducks and their mother came out from among the rushes on its borders, making a very pretty appearance.

In the autumnal and winter seasons Longdon Marsh covered with water used to present the appearance of an extensive lake, and bordered by a dense growth of sea-rushes, tall carices, and an army of plumose reeds, had a wild and solitary aspect, a few clumps of silvery-leaved poplars *(Populus canescens)* giving a peculiar character to the aqueous scene. But the drainage of the marsh, recently taken in hand, will, if successful, change the aspect of things entirely.

In the parish of Colwall, near the old hunting seat of the Bishops of Hereford, is a good-sized fish-pool, though now almost half choked-up and closely environed with a dense growth of tall carices, which on the last occasion I saw it was crowded with a flock of sable coots *(Fulica atra.)* These birds inhabit few pools in the Malvern district at present.

Near the last-mentioned pool, in the middle of a pasture, stand the COLWALL OAKS, the two oldest oak trees any where about the Malvern hills, and manifesting in their size of bole and bare stags arms at the tops rising high in air undoubted evidences of very high antiquity. The largest has been much shattered and lost some of its finest branches, so that at a distance it has a lank and attenuated look,

but when closely examined the size of the old bole now getting hollow within appears very great. The extreme base of the trunk bulges out considerably, and is rather more than 60ft. in circumference; but this diminishes so quickly that a yard from the ground the tree is only about 27ft. round. It is worthy of notice that in the deep rifts of the bark of this ancient oak a Lichen grows that I have nowhere else met with near Malvern, and that is the gray speckled Opegrapha *(O. lyncea)*, which is well marked by the pruinous or bloomy apotheciæ, which seem pressed into the white mortary crust on which they are placed. The companion oak to the great one, and almost as old, is 45ft. round its swollen base. These old veterans stand on ground that centuries ago formed part of a park belonging to the Bishops of Hereford, who had a country seat at Colwall, remains of which yet exist in a three-gabled timbered farmhouse near the church. Beside some of the windows of this old mansion are placed small pointed holes covered with a moveable board, from whence it is commonly said by the Colwall people that the deer were shot at. I am not inclined to endorse this supposition, believing rather that these curious holes were for talking to persons without after nightfall, when it might not be safe to open the door. Considering the centuries that the oak continues to grow, and that the trees are in a decaying state, it may be confidently affirmed that they are 800 years old at least, and more probably 900—so that Virgil well said of so enduring a tree—

> "For length of ages lasts his happy reign,
> And lives of mortal men contend in vain."

Yet 900 years will not carry us back into Druidical times, and probably no tree now exists in the precincts of Malvern Chace that stood in its leafy amplitude at the invasion of Julius Cæsar.

Still some dark and dense woods remain forest ground now

as in ages past, and I may mention the Berrow Wood, the extensive coverts that stretch about the western base of the Herefordshire Beacon, and the very thick wood on the eastern side of the Hollybush Hill, rendered still more gloomy by scattered though stunted yew-trees that shadow the ground solemnly even at mid-day. Forest scenery may be well exemplified within the Hollybush Wood, which, belonging to Earl Somers and preserved as a covert for game, is seldom or ever felled or disturbed. Here old trunks, either upturned by the furious winter gale or falling down by their decrepitude, lie rotting on the ground, and often get covered with a crop of velvety ear-like Fungi, or round hard balls black as charcoal, known to botanists as *Sphæriæ*. On the large decaying Polypori and other Fungi smaller coloured species grow, while Mosses and Jungermanniæ clothe the damp boughs of the shadowed trees with a dense verdant covering.

The Holly-bush Hill must have been noted for the evergreen hollies that cover its declivities from the time that the invading Saxons first approached its verdant crest, and thus it has continued, wild, beautiful, and almost untouched down to the present day. The holly is a very slow-growing tree, and some of those tall ones within the depths of the wood are of considerable bulk—several even decayed and partially hollow—and must be of very considerable age, extending to hundreds of years. Some of the older trees have on their smooth bark those curious "lirellæ," as botanists call them, which very closely resemble Persian or Arabic characters, and might almost seem to be translatable. The species called *Graphis elegans* is most conspicuous, and when rather enthusiastic about Lichens some years ago, the skins of the hollies here produced me some very capital inscriptions, though the scalps of the trees suffered temporarily. The hollies also produce the rare moss called *Daltonia heteromalla*.

Several of the larger holly trees have three or four trunks in close juxtaposition, offering a pleasant shade in summer time.

The holly must have been ever a great adornment to the thickets of Malvern Chace, and still is within many of the woods and copses near the hills, as in Brockhill Wood and about Cowleigh Park. The sides of that curious geological feature called "the Ridgway," at the western base of the Herefordshire Beacon, and leading towards Eastnor Castle, are still densely wooded, and though modern adornment has been introduced upon the scene, one natural feature remains in the pretty grey-green Juniper *(Juniperus communis)*, which being preserved here grows finer and taller than in any other part of the Malvern country. I have observed the Juniper on the borders of woods about the Croft, Mathon, and at Bush Hill, Powick, and it must formerly have been more dispersed about the Chace, but at present it is almost eradicated. It is on the side of the Ridgway, not far from the second lodge, that an oak appears with a considerable quantity of Mistletoe upon it, near the top of the tree. This oak is however a slender one, and not above 250 years old.

Among other localities that still retain traces of the green forest of olden days, High Grove and the Old Storrage stretching northward may be mentioned, as well as Rough Hill Wood, and the bushy and diversified dingles of Cowleigh Park, till lately horrent with masses of entangled brambles, and marshy spots shadowed over with clumps of alders. Even Abingdon the antiquary marked Cowleigh as "a place where the springs descending from above with a soft murmur delight the senses. A seat for the Muses, but better for devotion; for lifted aloft, yf ye look one way ye see nothinge but the hills and heavens, if the other below ye, a most large prospect of this perishing world which passeth in a moment." Dripshill, the Berrow Hill, and Sarnhill, the latter towards the southern end of the Chace, are also wooded eminences, with great quantities of the *Iris fœtidis-*

sima about them; and the grounds about Pull Court, the mansion of William Dowdeswell, Esq., emparked from a very early period, present a charming picture of sylvan scenery.

The idea of a forest, however, brings before the mind images of great clumps of tall trees standing in imposing grandeur, as well as majestic old forest veterans detached and standing separate here and there—

"Trees that have outliv'd the eagle;"

some venerable in decay with bare arms and riven trunks, patriarchs of the sylvan scene, rooted here and there like chieftains surrounded by their subject retainers. Of these it must be confessed that not any very great number can be adduced, but I will now proceed to enumerate some of the most curious relics of forest times that yet remain scattered in and about the confines of the Chace. Along the sides of brooks and antient water-courses old trees and weather-beaten boles long remain to an uninterrupted old age, and so neglected pools may be found embowered with aged veteran patrician trees that for the sake of marking the spot and preserving the water have been suffered to remain till in their decrepitude, for though well deserving the notice of the lover of woodland scenery, they have become worthless as timber. In such spots the old features of the forest may yet be realised, and here the aquatic vegetation peculiar to such localities gives them a characteristic appearance, and may occasionally shelter wild-fowl. Masses of tall Carices or the taller Reed-mace *(Typha latifolia)* with its black heads of catkins here rise up in dense thickets, and form with the great yellow-flowered Iris a covert that Willows stoop over and Alders and scraggy black Poplars safely guard. Several scattered ponds, especially towards the Severn, are bordered with such conspicuous plants as the great long-leaved Water-dock, the blue-flowered Skull-cap *(Scutellaria galericulata)*, the great Water-plantain, or the tall-branched bur-reed *(Sparganium ramosum.)* Other ponds are green with a close investiture of

duck-weed, or coated over with the small heart-shaped leaves of the Frog-bit water-lily, whose delicate white flowers rise to view most visibly in the evening twilight. Then, again, there are half-dried-up marshy spots, where some overturned and hollow willow slowly yields to time, which are occupied with a crowded growth of the Water-dropwort *(Œnanthe Phellandrium)*, or the blue-eyed flowers of the Forget-me-not. Grand scenes of forest scenery may be swept away with the trees that formed them, and large tracts of land may be reclaimed and devoted to arable purposes; but the little pools, brooks, and water-courses, with the coppices that border them, must remain to adorn the country with poetical quotations from lost books, even by the dusty road-side. Yet the desecration of the landscape proceeds, and one copse after another disappears, as I noted not long since at Bush Hill, near Powick, where a piece of woodland, long left intact, and once beautiful with hoary juniper bushes, as I remember, and large flowering trees of the Service *(Pyrus torminalis)*, had been cut down and ruthlessly ruined.

As forming a good picture of sylvan scenery, "The Grove" at Little Malvern may be referred to, on the eastern edge of which is a fine spreading oak, known as "THE BENEDICTINE OAK," which, had it the faculty of Tennyson's "talking oak," could doubtless bear witness to the colloquies of monks from the adjacent priory. Though this particular oak can only make pretension to have had Benedictine monks under its branches when Little Malvern Priory was intact, yet in those days there were older patrician trees existing going much farther back into "the times before them," and of the Priory itself it might then have been justly said in the words of Byron—

> "It stood embosom'd in a lonely valley,
> Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
> Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
> His host with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke,
> And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
> The dappled foresters."

Within the grove, extending as it does to the very base of the Herefordshire Beacon, by degrees the external world is entirely shut out, and all is solitude and seclusion. Tall oaks and ashes rise high in air upon the slanting banks of the glen, but beneath their branches only a mazy thicket of brambles and close-growing eagle-brakes are discernible, or the rough surface of the Beacon closing the vista. A narrow streamlet glides with a faint murmur though unseen from the plants that environ it at the bottom of the slope, and here is loneliness that might again excite to eremetical abstinence or the solemnity of religious thought.

Though the Chace even now possesses a few "salvage woods of antient growth," yet old trees of any size are mostly scattered about at wide intervals, and many have been "levelled," as Cottle says in his poem on Malvern, long ago. Here and there antient battered oaks, shorn of their grand spreading arms, and hacked mercilessly from time to time, tell a tale of antiquity, for doubtless they have stood the brunt of many hundred winter storms, and with respect to some their age can only be guessed at, though probably reaching back at least into Plantagenet times, when Hanley Castle was entire, and a Despencer or a Beauchamp rode forth with his verderers to rouse the deer from their lair. Such oaks may be occasionally noticed in old hedgerows, like the one represented *(see the cut opposite)*, which is 17ft. in circumference at 3ft. from the ground.

This tree stands in a field near the Severn, and puts out horizontal arms in a very curious manner. It is a characteristic specimen of what is called a "bur-oak," of which many may be seen, having been pollarded, and thus left to shoot forth new arms, and make a more dwarfish appearance than it would otherwise have done. When thus left in the condition of "bur-oaks," the decaying branches sometimes assume curious and even demoniacal shapes. This is the case with an old

OLD POLLARD OAK, IN A MEADOW NEAR THE SEVERN, SOUTHERN PART OF MALVERN CHACE.

To face page 28.

THE "DEVIL'S OAK," NEAR SHERARD'S GREEN, MALVERN.

o face page 29.

and partly hollow oak that stands in a hedge by the side of the road leading to Sherrard's Green, below Great Malvern, and bears the name of "THE DEVIL'S OAK," which the outline of several of its dying branches might well indicate for an appropriate name. It is said, however, that the appellation was really given to it from some sweeps having been seen to emerge in the mist of an autumnal morning from its cavity where they had been sheltering, and as they disappeared in the fog, looked very much like young devils! The name at all events is likely to stick to the deformed tree. Another curious old hollow oak, all but dead, stands with a shed placed against its serried bole by the road side near the boundary of the parishes of Pendock and the Berrow, and is probably between seven and eight hundred years old.

Only one oak of any conspicuous size or spread of bough now remains standing near Great Malvern, and that is in the middle of the pasture next to Cowleigh Farm-house, and so may be called the COWLEIGH OAK. This indeed does not as yet show the stag's horns—"reliques of its trophies old,"—that denote extreme antiquity; but it is a tree of considerable size and breadth of head, and its trunk is about 24ft. in circumference at a yard from the base. It may be considered as more than six hundred years old. "Cowley's Oke" is referred to in a MS. Survey of Malvern Chace, A.D. 1633.

Some of the grand spreading oaks that adorn the beautiful grounds of Pull Court, Bushley,* the residence of William Dowdeswell, Esq., may give a good idea of the aspect of Malvern Forest ere its best trees were felled, and some of these majestic veterans may claim an antiquity extending as far back as four or five centuries. A curious lone tall but hollow oak stands in a field by the side of the road between the Oxeye

* Though Bushley by some special grant appears to have been not included in the Chace of Malvern, yet Dr. Nash states that there was a park here which belonged to the Earls of Warwick; and there was also a manor in the parish attached to the Abbey of Tewkesbury.

turnpike-gate and the Long Green, on the road from Tewkesbury to Pendock, which must have been a rural land-mark for many generations. It is swollen about the base, with a considerable hollow within, able to shelter many wayfarers, and there is, I have heard, some legend or story in connection with it.

The "White-leaved Oak" valley between the Ragged-stone and Keysend-hills, keeps in its name the memory of an oak that existed there within memory, whose leaves being variegated with white blotches, caused it to be considered a curiosity and prodigy. Such oaks with variegated leaves are very uncommon, but occur occasionally, and one with its leaves slightly mottled with white now stands upon the sienitic boss in Cowleigh Park. Some superstition is generally attached to them.*

Scattered over the country once included in Malvern Chace, many dwarf "bur-oaks" of considerable age may yet be found in old hedgerows and by the side of lonely pools and streams, where they are with difficulty dislodged, and after lopping push forth a crowd of young branches on their distorted heads. A remarkable dwarf tree of this description exists on the banks of the Teme in the parish of Leigh, about a mile west of Bransford Bridge. This has a bole much swollen above the base, and is 20ft. in girth at a yard from the ground. It is represented in the accompanying cut, well recalling Mason's description in "Caractacus"—

> ——"Behold yon oak,
> How stern he frowns, and with his broad brown arms
> Chills the pale plain beneath him."

The Yew *(Taxus baccata)* may be considered as a tree equal if not superior in endurance to the oak, and in the woods that still remain within the boundaries of the Chace, this long-enduring tree is plentiful and certainly indigenous, especially

* Heath, in his account of the Scilly Islands on the coast of Cornwall, says—"In Lanhadron Park there grows an oak that bears *leaves speckled with white;* as another called Painter's Oak grows in the Hundred of East. Some are of opinion that divers antient families of England are pre-admonished by oaks bearing strange leaves." *Descript. of Scilly Isles and Cornwall*, 8vo, p. 246.

GREAT BUR OAK, STANDING IN A FIELD ON THE BANKS OF THE TEME, IN THE PARISH OF LEIGH.

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OLD HOLLOW YEW TREE IN CRADLEY CHURCH-YARD.

upon the hilly ground of the Silurian strata. In one of these woods I have counted between twenty and thirty yews, and in the winter season they are very conspicuous. Most of the churchyards in the Malvern district possess a yew, but except one in Stanton churchyard, and two in Cradley churchyard, none are of very remarkable size or great age. The largest of the Cradley yews is rather more than 26ft. in circumference at 3ft. from the base. The most picturesque of these is hollow, with a wide spread of branches, and is depicted in the opposite wood-cut.* In Stanford Bishop churchyard just within Herefordshire, is a still larger female yew, that in 1852 measured 27ft. in circumference at 4ft. above its base, and higher up where the trunk bulges out, 31ft. There is a yew of great antiquity in Forthampton churchyard, all the upper part of which was blown down by a hurricane in 1839, though the base of the bole (then 26ft. in girth) yet remains, with a living branch extending from it. I obtained a section of one of the branches, of the diameter of 9 in., within which were 227 rings of annual growth. If the growth of the bole was in proportion to that of the branch, this yew might be calculated as having existed more than twelve hundred years. This would take us back to A.D. 670, and is by no means at all improbable. A very antient and singular yew-tree now stands on the truncated summit of the oval artificial mount at Bromsberrow called Conygree Hill, and which looks like a huge dendroidal skeleton, with the baldness of its branches, almost devoid of verdure from being in a great degree shut out of light and air by a modern plantation

* In connection with the yew, and its subservience to the bowmen of England, "dreadful with the bended yew," which was in use for general practice more or less in every parish prior to the time of Henry VIII., as shown in Bishop Latimer's quaint sermons preached before King Edward VI., I may remark that an inhabitant of Cradley mentioned to me that many "Archers" and "Bendbows" were still extant in and about Cradley and Malvern, their family name derived from the former use of the bow. The common use of the bow among all classes is referred to by Shakspeare in his Richard the 2nd, when Lord Scroop tells the deserted king—

"The very beadsmen learn to bend their bows
Of double fatal yew, against thy state."

Latimer mentions that as a yeoman's son he was very early taught how to bend his bow.

that now surrounds the old tree, and robs it of the nutriment that its huge bole and numerous boughs demand. When measured in 1840 it was 25ft. in girth, and as one of the oldest trees about the Malvern Hills, it is to be hoped that it may be carefully preserved by Osman Ricardo, Esq., on whose property it stands. The mount is supposed to have been a place of judicial assembly in antient British times, and the yew may even then have existed. The annexed cut is taken from a sketch made on the spot some years since, but it remains in its seclusion in the same state. This yew must be certainly more than a thousand years old. A yew of considerable size and showing the graves of "the rude forefathers of the hamlet" from Norman if not Saxon times, throws a mournful gloom upon the south side of Bromsberrow churchyard, thus forming

> ——— "A pillar'd shade
> Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
> By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
> Perennially; beneath whose sable roof
> Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
> With unrejoicing berries, ghostly shapes
> May meet at noontide: Fear, and trembling Hope,
> Silence, and Foresight—Death the skeleton,
> And Time the shadow, there to celebrate
> As in a natural temple, scatter'd o'er
> With altars undisturb'd of massy stone,
> United worship." *Wordsworth.*

The Wytch Elm *(Ulmus montana)*, is an undoubted indigenous tree partial to upland ground, where if unmolested its branches spread far out and depend very gracefully; but in general it comes under the woodman's axe to stand as a debased pollard, and thus treated its head in time assumes enormous proportions on the top of a bole much less in bulk, and often makes a very grotesque appearance. Two of such monstrosities existing at Cradley, are depicted in the Woolhope Naturalists' Club Transactions for 1868, and others almost as strange-looking may be noticed by any observer in the course of his rambles about the margin of woods near the base of the Malvern chain. A Wytch elm of some size and great age, though dwarf, stands near the eastern base of the Keysend Hill, near the carriage-

ANCIENT YEW TREE ON CONYGREE-HILL, BROMSBERROW.

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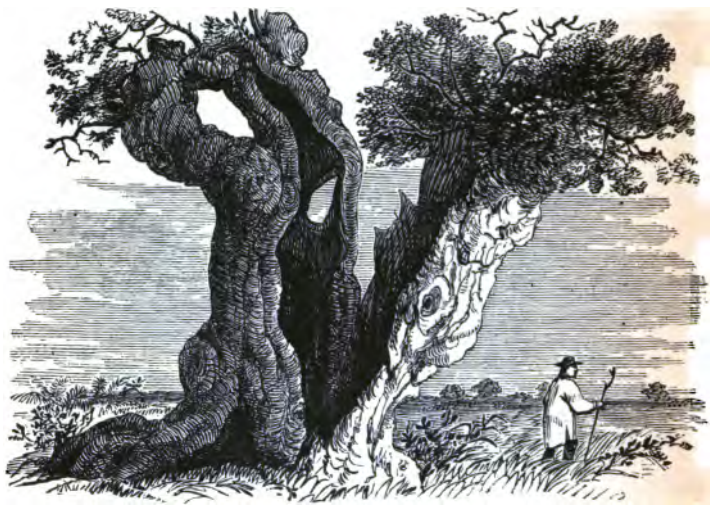

HOLLOW WYTCH ELM *(Ulmus montana)*, NEAR KNIGHTSFORD BRIDGE.

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drive to Bromsberrow Court; and another curious hollow tree of the same species occurs in the vicinity of Knightsford Bridge on the river Teme. A representation of this is given, and as will be seen the sylvan veteran makes a picturesque object. Superstition still retains some hold upon the Wytch Elm, if its branches are cut and bound in a peculiar manner, as a dread of "the evil eye" still lurks in rural recesses.

Some difference of opinion has been expressed by botanists and historians of forest trees as to the claims of the Lime or Linden to nativity in Britain, but in the shape of *Tilia parvifolia* it occurs in so many woods and coppices in the Malvern country eastward of the hills, that its claims as a native tree appear to be indisputable, though none of any great size can be noted in woods. But the lime is there mostly cut down as coppice-wood, and few trees of any great age are suffered to stand. I have observed the lime abundantly in woods at the Berrow, in a wood at the eastern base of the Herefordshire Beacon, in High Grove, Mathon, in a wood on the Little Storrage, at Rosebury Rock, &c. By the side of Leigh Brook it forms bushes to some extent, and in woods and coppices about Leigh the lime appears with the characters of *Tilia Europæa*. In the parish of Bromsberrow is a fine specimen of *T. parvifolia*, standing where some roads meet near the Brownsend, and this is called "the BROWNSEND LIME," but it has been planted, evidently. Some very fine trees of *Tilia Europæa* now stand in a field about half-a-mile south of Bromsberrow Church, and by the side of the road leading from Ledbury towards Gloucester. Two of these, growing near each other, have become conjoined, both by the amalgamation of their arms and by a lateral junction at the root. The largest of these trees is 27ft. in circumference at 3ft. from the ground, and is 36ft. round the base; the other is 11ft. 3in. in girth at a yard from the ground, and 19ft. in circumference at the base. The whole mass if

measured as one tree (and the interval between the boles where the connecting root joins them is only 19in.), is full 48ft. in circumference.* The annexed wood-cut gives the appearance of this didymous tree, when divested of its foliage. When these trees were planted I have been unable to ascertain. The Brownsend Lime is 18ft. in girth, 3ft. from the ground.

In a field on the Priory Farm, Little Malvern, are several large trees of *Tilia grandifolia*, but these do not belong exactly to forest times, having certainly been planted either by one of the Priors of Little Malvern, or some of his lay successors to the Priory lands. The flowers of this species are larger and sweeter in scent than the common kind, and the pallid bracts are more evident. The leaves are not larger than those of *T. Europæa*, but they are downy beneath, and the tree better deserves the trivial name of *grandiflora* from its larger and more odorous flowers, fully realising the poetical idea that—

"A murmur of the bee
Dwells ever in the honey'd lime above."

MRS. HEMANS.

The Maple *(Acer campestre)* is a very common tree on the borders of woods and coppices about the Chace, as well as in old hedgerows, and though pollarded too frequently by the farmer, yet as it is but seldom entirely cut down, it maintains a long life, though often putting on a stunted or grotesque appearance. It is a slow-growing tree, and it is rare to find any of considerable bulk, though some trees standing singly that I have met with must be above five hundred years old. The only tree about Hanley that can be certainly referred to the time when the Beauchamps possessed Hanley Castle is a maple. But the largest veteran of this species that I have met with stands in a field at Powick not far from the Teme, and exhibits a very old decayed and hollow bole from which a younger one proceeds, itself of considerable size, and spreading

* These measurements were made in 1839.

INOSCULATED LIMES (*Tilia Europœa*), STANDING IN A FIELD IN THE PARISH OF BROMSBERROW.

OLD HOLLOW DIDYMOUS MAPLE (*Acer campestre*), IN A FIELD NEAR THE TEME AT POWICK.

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much beyond its parent. The girth of the combined boles near the base exceeds 14ft., which is greater than has been before recorded of any English maple. This curious old tree is represented in the wood-cut annexed. Others may be remarked of greater spread of bough, but are not equal in antiquity to this tree, the oldest portion of which probably reaches to 700 years.

Another slow-growing and long-enduring tree, still occurring sparsely in almost every wood in and around the Chace, is the Service-tree (*Pyrus torminalis*), which, however, seldom attains any large size, and presents a beautiful aspect when in flower. It mostly gets cut down within woods, but at Bush Hill, Powick, in Black Hawthorn Lane leading to Madresfield, and a few other neglected spots, some good-sized trees occur that show both flowers and the well-known brown fruit, which requires to be kept a considerable time before it is eaten. Within "My lord's wood," situated in the parish of Powick, and not far from Bransford Court, so called from its being the wood of the manor devoted specially to the lord's use, and so existing as a wood from the very earliest period to which thought can revert, are some tall individuals of the Service, the tallest and oldest that I know of in Worcestershire. The age of these trees can only be guessed at while standing, but the Service-tree grows at so slow a rate, and these have been so long protected within the wood, that it would not be unreasonable to refer their date to as early as the reign of Edward the First.

The Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), is a widely distributed tree, and by the side of brooks often puts on a scraggy appearance, decrepid with age and batteration by tempest, more especially if perforated and reduced to rottenness by the attacks of the monstrous caterpillar of the goat moth. But scarcely any tree has a more majestic appearance or extends its boughs wider than the ash when left to grow with

sufficient space and undisputed sovereignty. A splendid tree that grew in the grounds at Hope End, near Ledbury, is mentioned by Barret in his account of the Malvern Hills, published in the early part of the present century, and when I measured it some years ago it was nearly 40ft. round the base close to the ground. Some enemy of the Dryads has caused this beautiful ash to be felled. One almost as large, though not so regular and widely-spreading, I have noticed in a field near Cork's Hill, Forthampton, on the estate of Joseph Yorke, Esq., and I trust that it still exists. Though Forthampton is out of the exact bounds of Malvern Chace, yet it may be said to be in the Malvern country, as the Hanley Castle people had right of common there in the forest times, and the dimensions of this large ash tree are worth recording. Close to the ground where the roots spread out it was nearly 36ft. round, and at 3ft. from the base the bole was 22ft. 2in. in girth. The radius of the longest arm was 36ft., and its height was 91ft. I know of no other ash so large as this. In Eldersfield churchyard are some monstrous pollard ashes, one of which is above 30ft. round its swollen base, and 15ft. in girth at 3ft. from the ground. The ash is sometimes didymous or double, and I noticed one at Forthampton 2ft. between the twin boles; but they often grow nearer than this, and when by an inosculation an opening or needle-like eye is formed, making a hole through which a person may squeeze, there is a rustic superstition that if married women who have not hitherto rejoiced in a progeny, are anxious for a young olive-branch springing up in their households, their wishes will be gratified after pushing through this orifice in the rifted ash. I only record this as an "old saying," which, however, seems to have descended from Druidical times, and I knew a lady who at any rate if she did not benefit *by the process*, had her wishes gratified *after* making the experiment.

The Alder *(Alnus glutinosa)* must of necessity be noticed, as its prevalence in the district is stated by all authors to have given rise to the name of Malvern, *Moel* or *Mol* being Celtic for a bare mountain, and *wern* the Celtic appellation for the alder tree.* Even now every stream that flows from the hills towards the Severn is bordered by alder bushes, and the coppices at the base of the hills, until the recent spread of villas and houses around Great Malvern, were crowded with alders. This tree, being too often lopped like the willow, becomes mostly dwarf and distorted, so that alders of any altitude or spread of bough are of rare occurrence, though as it is an enduring tree and will bear any hacking, and decays but slowly, the old stumps that remain by brook sides on which many a patient angler takes his stand, must be of great age and belong to forest times. But if allowed to grow unmolested the alder becomes a handsome tree, and rises to a considerable height. I have observed a very large didymous alder near Powick, the two boles joining near the base and becoming hollow, but they divide above at a considerable angle, forming a very remarkable tree that I should estimate at 600 years old, and possibly a greater age, for an alder will last as long as any oak. The combined boles of this tree exceed 17ft. in girth, which is larger than any alder whose size is recorded by British dendrologists.

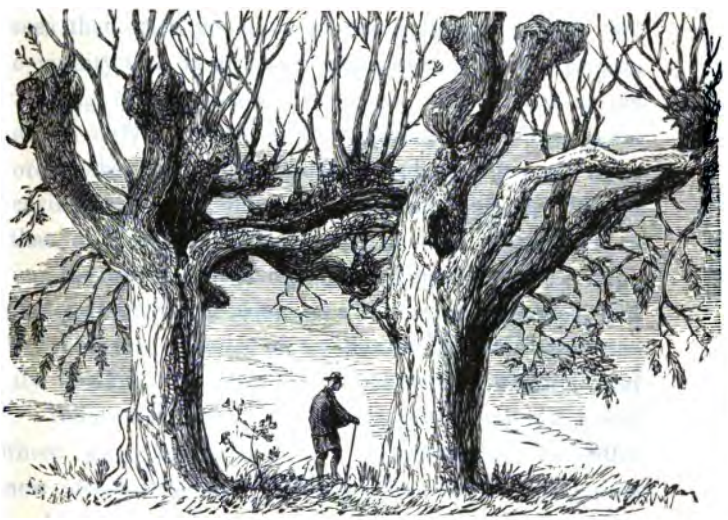
* The word *wern* in Celtic signifies dark and gloomy, but was applied to the alder as growing in dull and gloomy places. Thus the British name Peng-werne, given to Shrewsbury, is said by local writers to have meant the head of the alder-groves, as Malvern was the bare hill rising from among alders. Kennet has remarked, that *Ivernia*, or Ibernia (the old name of Ireland), was so called from the *alders* with which the island abounded, *vern* signifying an alder in the Irish dialect. *(Parochial Antiquities*, p. 684.*)* The epithet *wern* appears in the name of a stream near Worcester—the *La-wern*, commonly pronounced Lawrn,—which is so profusely crowded with alders on its banks and even spreading across the stream, that it might very properly be called the alder brook. An old author thus mentions the ancient appearance of the Malvern Hills, which gives the exact definition of the original Celtic name fortunately preserved from antient days—"In the western part of the district of the Wiccii, where it is divided from the county of Hereford, there extends, in a long line, from south to north, the Malvern Hills; *their heads being naked and stoney, their sides being here and there covered with alder beds.*"

Willows must have been at all times a characteristic feature, shadowing the streams that intersect the Chace, but especially remarkable as bordering the river Teme, its northern boundary, where they are very plentiful. The white willow *(Salix alba)*, is the most abundant tree of this genus, but from its fragile nature there are none of any great age, as they are so easily upset by winds and storms, and very soon decay and become hollow. By the Teme side and along Leigh brook the most singular and grotesque shapes appear. Where these have been pollarded their heads assume monstrous forms, and become receptacles for numerous epiphytes. Hollow willows are sometimes preserved and renewed by a root being dropt from above down the cavity from the pollarded head, which reaching the ground forms a fulcrum for the old tree, and new branches are developed from this scion which becomes at last a fresh growth when the old shell entirely decays and breaks up. Such singular dendroidal forms, dead, hollow, and distorted below, yet throwing out from their broken and shapeless tops above an array of living shoots with fresh green leaves, recals the vivid description of an old English poet as to an aged moribund tree, that was

> ——— "Dry and dead,
> Still clad with reliques of its trophies old,
> Lifting to heaven its aged hoary head
> Whose foot on earth hath got but feeble hold,
> And half disbowell'd stands above the ground."

One of the largest willows that I have noted has its hollow bole split into two parts, and is 16ft. 6in. girth, with many young shoots from the top. This stands by Laughern brook, but how old there is no data to determine.

In a field near Bransford Bridge there is a very curious case of two willows having become inosculated, and their arms thus united presented a very curious appearance at the time the sketch was taken represented in the cut annexed. But willows, more than any other tree, are so hacked and despoiled



CONJOINED WILLOWS *(Salix alba)*, IN A FIELD NEAR BRANSFORD BRIDGE.

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year after year that they are always changing their appearance, while boisterous winds upset them, often giving the rustic the advantage of a temporary bridge across a brook, and presenting a picturesque sketch to the artist—

> "Where leans the mossy willow half-way o'er,
> On which the shepherd crawls astride to throw
> His angle, clear of weeds and vagrant flags
> That crowd the water's brim." *Clare.*

Such instances come in the way of the wanderer at every excursion. It is more curious, perhaps, to perceive the seedling trees that often get upon an old pollarded willow, and dispute vitality with it, at last if not inducing its destruction finally taking up the place it occupied, if the roots of the intruder can only reach the soil. Seedling hawthorns, yews, sycamores, oaks, and various frutescent plants often get upon the decaying head of a pollard willow, combining their foliage with that of the grey willow with an odd effect, and so deceiving the eye at a little distance. I have noticed a large *Rhamnus catharticus* growing on a willow near Powick, and an oak of some size mounted on a willow at Bransford, that was evidently breaking up the hollow tree within which it had rooted. Willows of large size are rare, and I have not found one whose girth exceeded 17ft. A fine vigorous *Salix alba* now stands near the Severn below Upton Bridge, of considerable size, and may attain large dimensions if left untouched in years to come.

The Hawthorn *(Cratægus Oxyacantha)*, in its natural form as a closely-branched tree of no great height, affects the sides of hills or open heathy places, and in age the old bole often becomes divided at the base. The only part of the Malvern Hills where the hawthorn has established itself to any extent is in the hollow above the Holy Well, where the declivity is whitened in early summer by the fragrant blossoms of "the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale," very prettily. Some stunted entangled hawthorns here overgrown

with the dingy purple stems of the *Jungermannia tamarisci*, as well as mosses and hoary lichens, must be of great age—perhaps six or seven hundred years—but I can only speak with certainty of the section of one hawthorn trunk that I saw, where I numbered more than 300 rings of annual growth, and the greater number were of larger dimensions than this one. In the space at the junction of the road from Madresfield to Powick, at the end of "Black-Hawthorn Lane," there stood formerly an hawthorn of considerable size and age, for the bole was 9ft. in girth—very large dimensions for an hawthorn. This memorial tree has been felled, which it need not have been, and a young oak has been planted in its place. On the hill between the old Powick bridge and Worcester there stood within memory an aged thorn called "Prince Robin's tree," it being stated and believed that at one of the first skirmishes in the Civil Wars of Charles the First's reign, that Prince Rupert was stationed at or under this tree when he directed the charge that routed the Parliamentary cavalry, and forced their immediate retreat and flight. This thorn must have been of great age, for it finally rotted away, and no remains of it now appear upon the spot, but another planted hawthorn marks the site.

There is a fine thorn of considerable size on the estate of W. Willis-Bund, Esq., at Upper Wick, not far from the river Teme at Powick, and this tree I have understood is mentioned as a boundary tree in writings of the property more than 200 years old. It was then a considerable-sized tree, and may now be estimated as probably numbering more than 600 years. In the vicinity of Knightsford Bridge, on the Teme, is a curious instance of the anastomization of a maple and hawthorn, both of considerable size, and forming a combined mass of foliage.

Formerly there were various "holy thorns" about the country, a variety of the hawthorn that bloomed about Christmas, and

was popularly said to open its blossoms only on old Christmas eve. Most of these holy thorns have disappeared, but one existed till a late period at Redmarley Farm, near Acton Beauchamp, some five or six miles north of Great Malvern, and this is said to have been the resort of hosts of country people on Christmas-eve more than a quarter of a century ago. The spiteful occupant of the farm at last cut the tree down, being annoyed by the visits of so many curious persons, who coming from various distances taxed his cider-barrel more than his churlish spirit approved.* All these Christmas flowering thorns were said to be scions from the original tree, presumed to have been planted by St. Joseph of Arimathea, at Glastonbury, after his landing from Palestine.

The Mountain-Ash *(Pyrus aucuparia)*, is a native tree, but there is but a very scanty sprinkling of it in the copses of the Chace, though it abounds more in the western woods, as in High Grove, Mathon. This tree presents beautiful masses of corymbose flowers in May, but never attains any great size or extraordinary age. The largest recorded in this district is mentioned in Nash's Worcestershire as growing in the grounds at Severn End, in Hanley Castle parish. The dimensions of this tree are stated by Nash as "8ft. high to the boughs, and the circumference of the body at the height of 8ft. from the ground 8ft. 10in., the height of the tree is about 43ft. Another of nearly equal size may be seen in the plantations of John Martin, Esq., of Ham Court, near Upton-upon-Severn."† The mountain ash has been much planted about Malvern and on the declivities above Malvern Wells.

Another tree to be seen scattered generally singly in woods is the Birch *(Betula alba)*, distinguished by its slender

* See the "Pictures of Nature round the Malvern Hills," &c., where the subject is entered upon more in detail. I have seen one of the holy thorns growing in the hedge of a garden at Suckley.

† Nash's Worcest. under Hanley Castle, Vol. 2, p. 559.

dependent branches and smooth silvery bark, which however becomes rugged and riven in age. I can refer to no very large ones, but near Acton Beauchamp I have observed a grove consisting entirely of birches, some of which exhibited a rugged bark, denoting an age going back several hundred years. At any rate this is an aboriginal grove, and as such may have existed in pre-historic times. Several places take their designations from birches, as Birchin Grove, Birchin Hall, Birch Wood, &c. This tree occasionally becomes much deformed by nodules on its branches, which look like an assemblage of birds' nests, and a birch thus strangely distorted stands on the Berrow Hill, Martley. Many trees occur in woods of the Chace not quite so observable as this, probably arising from some obstruction in the circulation of the sap of the tree, or the attack of insects.

The common wild Cherry *(Prunus avium)*, is now found scattered in a bushy form in most of the woods in and about Malvern Chace, especially those of Mathon, Colwall, and Cradley, on the Silurian strata, and unquestionably to my knowledge the cherry has much increased of late years in woods where the coppice is periodically felled, so that its flowers in April form a well-marked adornment of the scene. If, as stated by Pliny, the cherry was not known in Italy until introduced by Lucullus, from Pontus, at the close of the Mithridatic war (B.C. 67), and was carried by the Romans into Britain, then this tree now so widely dispersed can only be considered as naturalized, and very probably the stones are distributed about the country by birds from gardens and orchards. That this is no fanciful idea is evident from the fact that a little coppice of cherry trees has been formed on the top of the battlements of Newland church, Gloucestershire, where only birds could have deposited the stones from which they have sprung up. A similar fact has been remarked as to the appearance of the cherry in North America. M. le Cante

has stated that when beech woods are cut down there, that they are speedily replaced by cherry trees. He accounts for this remarkable fact on the supposition that birds, who eat the fruit with avidity, may have resorted to the woods for shelter, and there dropped the stones, which either lay dormant, or germinated and remained in a diminutive state until the beeches were cut down, when they advanced rapidly, and finally became the principal occupants of the soil. Now if the cherry tree has thus become naturalized in America, into which its introduction in modern times is certain, there is just ground for the opinion that its extensive diffusion through Europe may be attributed to the same cause, and that the assertion of the older authors, that it is of Asiatic origin, is correct.* Nevertheless though increasing in woods as it now does, if cultivated by the Romans in Britain, the birds of those days would soon colonise it, and therefore its first introduction among our indigenous trees must have been many centuries ago. The cherry will attain a large size if unmolested in its place of growth, and I remember a very tall and fine tree that stood on the eminence above the quarry of Ludlow rock, at the bottom of Purlieu-lane. The bole of this tree was about 10ft. in girth, and with its branches drooping from age, was truly an adornment of the scene. It was too beautiful to escape from the destroying axe, to which it succumbed some time after 1852, as it was then in existence.

The common Elm (*Ulmus campestris* or *suberosa*), though at present a prominent feature observable in the hedge-rows of all the midland counties of England, is certainly an introduced tree, as is evident from its so seldom producing ripened seeds in this country, and it therefore spreads and is perpetuated by scions proceeding from the

* See "The Forest Trees of Britain," by the Rev. C. A. Johns, where this and other trees, denizens or natives of Britain, are popularly described.

enduring roots. It seems probable that the Romans when established in Britain introduced this tree from Italy, and the common appellation elm, appears to be derived from the Latin *Ulmus*. Whenever introduced, it has extended itself wonderfully in hedgerows, while during the early part of the last century it was most extensively planted in avenues.* In many cases, also, the custom became common to plant an elm singly near farm-houses or in selected spots, and thus it is that solitary elms are now found scattered about in various places,† old, bare, hollow, and scarred, justifying the language that Clare, the rural poet, has applied to a reverend tree of this sort—

> "Huge Elm with rifted trunk all notch'd and scarr'd,
> Like to a warrior's destiny."

An old elm answering to this description stands close to a farm-house on the road from Upton-on-Severn to Little Malvern, and about a mile and a half from the former town. This tree, swollen, hollow, and battered, forms a grand mass of foliage worthy the pencil of an artist as a picturesque object, though getting into a ruined state, yet sending its topmost branches high into air. It is hollow, and as not unusual with old elms, swollen about the base, which adds to its apparent magnitude. It measures at a yard from the base nearly 30ft. in circumference. Not far from this spot is a site traditionally called "the Palace," where was probably a hunting seat of one of the lords owning the Chace in old times. Elms have an early tendency to decay, and often look older than they really are, and when, as is frequently the case,

* In the "Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club for 1868," there is an elaborate and most interesting paper by Dr. Bull, of Hereford, on "The Elm Tree in Herefordshire," and the learned doctor has certainly with extraordinary pains made out a case for his favourite tree, which, however, curiously enough, he says old people in Herefordshire call "the Worcester Elm," thus denoting, he says, "that the stream of civilization came from this direction." Dr. Bull only depicts one elm now existing at Holme Lacy as larger in girth than the Barnard's Green Elm, but its appearance is much less imposing than the latter tree.

† Elms were also planted in clumps occasionally, on waste land, as "the Harbour Elms," at Forthampton, so called from a former but now disused practice of forming festal harbours under trees at Whitsuntide.

THE FRIAR'S ELM (*Ulmus suberosa*), ON BARNARD'S GREEN, NEAR GREAT MALVERN.

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swollen and wenny about their bases, or bleached where the bark has been stripped off, they become frightfully phantasmic objects.

The Barnard's Green or FRIAR'S ELM, is an old, partially hollow, and very picturesque-looking tree, now standing on the side of the common by the road from Great Malvern to the Rhydd and Upton. Its roots extend spoke-like some distance round the elm, which is swollen and tempest-battered, but it still presents a pictorial aspect, as the wood engraving on the opposite page will render fully evident. It measures 45ft. round the base, and 25ft. in girth at 3ft. from the ground. To this winter-battered tree the lines of Cowper may be well applied:—

"Time hath made me hollow, and a cave
For owls to roost in!—
* * * * *
Embowell'd now, and of thy antient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind that seems
A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink."

As this elm on Barnard's Green has been preserved with honour as a memorial if not a gospel tree, and is still honoured with an inscription placed among its branches, it is probable that antient as it looks and battered and hollow as it is, it was planted as much as three hundred years ago, for assuredly its appearance has been much the same for the last half-century, and perhaps for a whole one. This computation would take us to some time in the 16th century, before the disafforestation of the Chace. A few years since, as I have heard, a mandate went forth for the destruction of this antient inhabitant of the common, but the Hama-Dryad of the tree influenced a neighbouring gentleman to contest the point, and a band of sylvans hurried to the rescue. By negociation the sentence of death was reversed, and a treaty ratified securing to the old elm its life interest in the green common it had so long shadowed, subject only to a quit-rent to the merciless winds. The elms are generally lopped

too much in Worcestershire, so that they become tall and lanky, and often strangely swollen about their bases, while when the lopping process is too long continued they become black and distorted, like relics of a forest conflagration—

> "For huge fantastic forms, gnarl'd, old, and gray,
> Assum'd the *Heath-hag* form in that dim scene."

An elm of this description, of which I took a sketch some years ago, stood in a field at Powick, not far from the Teme, putting on the grotesque aspect depicted in the annexed wood-cut. The lopping system induces to such appearances—bare, haggard, and monstrous. Once however planted in a hedge, the elm produces scions from the root, however it may be lopped and hacked, living on though in a dwarf and deformed state. It used to be a favourite for avenues, but the fragrant flowers of the lime and its quicker growth render the latter more to be preferred as an avenue tree.

By brook sides a few specimens of the indigenous Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*), may be met with here and there, similarly lopped, like the elm, and very scraggy-looking; but these old British poplars are gradually disappearing, and the Italian black poplar, now so much planted, takes their place, known by the masses of mistletoe that very soon load its branches, while no mistletoe ever appears on the indigenous poplars. This is a circumstance evident in a multitude of places. Some very tall Black Poplars where rooks have for many years made their congregated nests, stand on the western or right bank of the Severn, at the Upper and Lower Lodes opposite to Tewkesbury, but these are planted trees, though of considerable age.

There are other trees and shrubs forming the underwood and bushes about the Chace, such as Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*), Sloe (*Prunus spinosa*), Guelder-rose (*Viburnum Lantana* and *Opulus*),

BATTERED POLLARD ELM (*Ulmus suberosa*), IN A FIELD AT POWICK, NEAR THE TEME.

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&c., but as none of these attain any great size, and are too often cut down to attain any extended age, detailed remarks are unnecessary. With respect to Ivy *(Hedera Helix)*, however, lowly as its growth generally appears, yet when it does get firm hold upon a tree, it assumes an arborescent trunk, which becomes almost as large as the tree about which the treacherous ivy has spread its snake-like arms. I have noticed trees which the ivy has completely invested and overpowered, making individuals that permitted its first advances quite subsidiary to its own growth and spread of frondescence. An ash tree near Beauchamp's Court, I have noticed as thus circumstanced, and the yew in Purlieu-lane, leading to Mathon, is so entwined to the very extremity of its branches that it has become almost as much an ivy tree as a yew. The ivy that invests the Ivy-scar rock on the North Hill, must from the name given to it have been there for centuries; while in still more secluded spots like the wood-invested Rosebury rock by the Teme, near Knightsford Bridge, there are broad ivy stems that have quietly increased their huge bulk for many centuries, and may claim a very remote antiquity only to be guessed at.

There is, however, one domesticated tree, the Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), that deserves notice, as from some cause dating from old times, it has been planted near almost every homestead in the country, and often in churchyards near the yew, and thus Shakspeare has alluded to it, and the somewhat unpleasant scent of its leaves—

"The stinking Elder—grief."

This allusion shows why it has got into churchyards, but its various medicinal properties caused it to be nourished near houses, for as Borlase says in his History of Cornwall, "the medicinal use of its several parts is extraordinary, its leaves, buds, blossoms, berries, pith, wood, and bark, have more virtues than can possibly have room here without

entering into too minute detail." It must have been an early introduction into Britain, and some protective power appears to have been attached to it, which caused the elder to be generally planted in former times close to houses, and the custom is of high antiquity. That the elder is yet in some degree considered a safeguard to those who live near to its shade, or was so considered in not very remote times, appears from what a contributor to the *Athenæum* says, writing as late as 1846:—"The virtues of the elder tree in preserving men and cattle from witches is well known. In Devonshire farmers put a green twig of it in the staples of their stable doors, thus to keep out all unnatural intruders." Whether in olden times there really was more demoniacal influence at work in the world than at present, or it was only imagined so, still it was generally believed that some malignant influence was ever ready to assail a man at every turn he took, and which could only be averted by some counteracting remedy. As plants and trees lay conveniently at hand, or could be made to grow at every one's threshold, they were called in to do the best they could against the enemy. It was perhaps well to be on the safe side, and if spiritual foes can really be kept at bay by a plant or a stick, it may be right to use the cudgels accordingly, or have them at hand for that purpose. As the elder has been so long the guardian of houses, of course there are many fine flowering as well as old decayed trees dispersed over the country, and I have notes as to several old trees, but they never reach any remarkable bulk, though long enduring in a hollow and decaying state, and so surviving for centuries. Some remain that may be considered more than 500 years old, but these are all near houses, and it is very uncommon in woods, and conveyed there probably by birds, just as one has been thus planted on the tower of Castle Morton Church.

Numerous as orchards of Apple and Pear now are all over the country, between the Malvern Hills and the Severn, as well as in Herefordshire, it would be neglectful not to allude to such a prominent feature of the country now, though in the early days of the Chace there would be none except those close to habitations. The Crab *(Pyrus malus)*, and the wild thorny Pear *(Pyrus communis)*, may still be found sparsely distributed in coppices, but our orchards of improved fruit most probably came from the Continent. Whether some were planted by the first Saxon settlers may be uncertain, but orchards of the apple and pear were extended no doubt at a later date when the Normans came in. However that may be, the cultivation of the pear had become so general in Worcestershire by the beginning of the 15th century that Michael Drayton, in his description of the English army that fought at Agincourt under Henry V., says that the banner of the Worcestershire men was—

"A Pear-tree laden with its fruit."

The pear orchards must therefore have been in existence some time before the reign of Henry V. for Worcestershire to have been characterised by its pear-trees, and Camden in his "Britannia" refers to the fruit trees of Worcestershire as a remarkable feature of the county demanding special notice. In the poem of Piers the Ploughman, supposed to have been written by a monk of Great Malvern Priory, in the latter part of the 14th century, he thus alludes to the apple:—

"I preid Piers tho to pulle-a-down
An appul, and he wolde,
And suffre me to assaien (try)
What savour it hadde."

This, no doubt, was from an apple tree in an orchard. But neither apple or pear trees, being both in an artificial cultivated state, and grafted from some educated variety, have the endurance of a forest tree, and sooner decay and die out.

One of the finest pear orchards in the Malvern district is that known as the BARLAND PEAR ORCHARD, by the side of the road between Powick and Newland, numbering more than seventy tall trees, and which in a "hit" year, as it is called, has produced two hundred hogsheads of perry.* Here has been a celebrated orchard above a century, and looking at the size of the trees, old as they are now, it is probable that they have been in existence about 250 years, and their glory being now past, it may be, I think, a probable calculation that an orchard will wear out within 300 years.† If this be so, there can be few pear trees now standing older than this, the more ancient orchards having been replaced. Nevertheless in full maturity the pear tree almost rivals the oak in majestic aspect and ruggedness of bark, though not attaining the bulk or spread of boughs of the king of the forest. Many grand and lofty pear trees might be referred to besides those of the Barland Orchard before mentioned, and I have met with several 14ft. and 15ft. in girth at a yard from the ground, and these would be doubtless as much as 250 years old. The largest pear tree that I have found any account of

* This would be a profitable produce for a farmer if a "hit" occured every year, but as this is an exceptional case, pears like hops are a very variable crop, and I have been informed that in an ungenial flowering year this same orchard has only produced three hogsheads, which is a wide difference. It is also obvious that when a "hit" occurs, the price of perry would be much reduced from the glut in the market, while casks would be wanted to hold the superabundant drink. In such overflowing years I have been told that a large tub filled with cider or perry has been placed in a farmer's fold-yard open to all comers to imbibe any quantity they pleased.

† Mr. Thomas Andrew Knight states in his "Pomona Herefordiensis," that "The Barland Pear appears to have been extensively cultivated in Herefordshire (and probably in Worcestershire also) prior to the publication of Evelyn's Pomona in 1674, in which it is very frequently mentioned, and as no trees of this variety are found in decay from age, in favourable soils, it must be concluded that the identical trees which were growing when Evelyn wrote still remain in health and vigour." This was penned in 1811, and supposing the Barland Orchard to have been planted some time prior to 1674, the trees would now have been in existence more than 200 years, and as they now appear aged, they can scarcely be expected to last another hundred years as profitable fruit-bearing trees. Mr. Knight further says that "the original tree grew in a field called the *Bare Lands*, whence the variety obtained its name, in the parish of Bosbury, and was blown down a few years ago."—Knight, "*Pom. Heref.*" *under* XXVII. "*The Barland Pear.*"

is one that stood on a piece of land given by the Hon. and Rev. George Rushout Bowles, a few years since, to build the Tenbury Union Workhouse upon. This, it is stated, was 22ft. in girth, reaching to the height of 105ft., and its boughs extended over a circuit of nearly 100 yards. A pear tree in an orchard near Madresfield has a bole of nearly 18ft. in girth, and if permitted to stand may in a few years equal the dimensions of the Tenbury tree.

Apple orchards are not so enduring as those of the pear, one reason of which may be that they are more liable to the attacks of the "baleful mistletoe," and in time, from neglect, put on a very rueful look, though the Herefordshire orchards suffer most in this respect.* The apple tree also is much more liable to be upset by boisterous gales,† and in almost every orchard some trees will be found thus *thrown upon their knees*, or half rooted up, while the indifferent farmer suffers them to remain in this state, and so they continue.

The apple tree never reaches the height or bulk of the pear, though I have observed in pastures at Mathon old apple trees hollow and curiously tortuous in their boles,

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* See the "Botanical Looker-out in England and Wales," 8vo., *under January*, for a full account of the mistletoe, and the trees in Worcestershire and the adjacent counties on which it has been found. I had an idea that "except existing in excess," the mistletoe was not injurious to the trees on which it fixes itself, and where a bush depends at the extremity of a branch, as it often does upon black poplars, it cannot do much harm. But in orchards it doubtless increases too much for the good of the trees, and Professor Buckman in a paper on the subject has intimated that its effect is to stimulate the sap, so that apple trees will bear earlier and become in a state of decrepitude sooner with mistletoe upon them than without it. Whether from superstition or carelessness, the apple orchards of Herefordshire especially are suffered to bear loads of mistletoe, and it may be well for the negligent farmer that Christmas demands an enormous supply of the mirth-inspiring plant. Dr. Bull has almost exhausted the history of the mistletoe in the Transactions of the Woolhope Club.

† Fierce winds, from the west or south-west, are often destructive to orchards, and most apple orchards have trees in them leaning from the blustering weather quarter; but though the apple is the greatest sufferer, the pear tree is not exempt, for when I was resident at Forthampton in the winter of 1838-39, a hurricane upset five pear trees in an orchard in my occupation, destroying my hope of fruit for the next season, and the same blast despoiled and nearly ruined the ancient yew in Forthampton churchyard.

whose antiquity might possibly reach beyond 300 years.* Orchard plantations have doubtless much increased since the disafforestation of the Chace; and now, especially when in full flower in the spring, they make a beauteous feature in the landscape that cannot fail to excite the admiration of every observer. As Cottle has said—

—— "Orchards with their odoriferous breath
Perfume the air, and to the sight present
One sheet of blossoms; the beholder's eye
Revels at once in unconstrain'd delight."

But the nearer prospect of flowering trees is undoubtedly the most alluring, while in autumn the red apple, "red as evening sky," presents a picture charming as well to the spectator as the gatherer and grower of the fruits. Cider and perry is now the common drink of the farm labourer in Worcestershire and Herefordshire, whatever it was in the olden days of the Forest, and at harvest time there is no stint of it, the claim of each labourer to his stipulated dozen or more quarts per diem being never abated, but added to if possible. The amount of "drink," commonly so called, that is cider and perry, consumed in a year upon a large liquor-producing farm, is hardly to be credited. A farmer residing on the borders of Herefordshire and Shropshire, the taste of whose best produce I enjoyed in the summer of 1868, told me that in a good year he made fully 300 hogsheads of liquor from his orchards, and the greater part was consumed by his labourers and family.

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* That apple orchards were in existence in Saxon times, and probably earlier, is evident from their mention in Charters of Saxon wording yet extant. "The Haran (or hoary) Apel-tree," is noticed in Heming's "Cartulary," when referring to the boundaries of Wyke, Worcestershire. This was Wick Episcopi, near Powick, and Mr. Allies says (*Antiq. Worcest.*, p. 389,) that "the apple tree stood near where the Teme joins the Severn." It must have been an old tree then to have been written down by the Saxon surveyor as "haran," or hoary; and in the present day old apple trees in decay have their trunks whitened and their arms bearded and made grey by an overgrowth of lichens, erroneously termed mosses by poets, as instanced in Southey's lines—

"A wrinkled crabb-ed man they picture thee,
Old Winter! with a rugged beard as grey
As the long moss upon the apple tree."

It is to be observed that though the orchards of apple and pear trees now so extensively occupying the former waste lands of the Chace, are all *grafted* trees, and so of man's production or education, yet both the crab (*Pyrus malus*), and the common pear (*Pyrus communis*), are now to be found scattered here and there in almost every wood; but it should be noted that the latter is seldom found in a flowering state, and while the sour fruit of the crab is common enough, matured wild pears are seldom or never observed. Mr. Allies, however (*Antiq. of Worcester*), mentions a spot at Alfrick, called "Thorn[illegible] Pear Coppice," from the numerous thorny wild pear trees [illegible] within it.

I have by no means enumerated all the old and curious dendroidal forms of battered and grotesque trees that might be found in secluded spots within the limits of the ancient Chace of Malvern, for the subject could not be easily exhausted in detail, and as years roll on other trees not at present very remarkable, will be progressing into veterans for the study and examination of lovers of woodland scenery in years to come. Those I have recorded may then be compared with the dimensions now assigned them, or if they shall have passed away here will be their memorial. Change is ever progressing, and whatever may be thought of the ages of the past, notwithstanding the things that pseudo-interpreters of prophecy may say as to the day of doom, I consider that "this great globe and all that it inherit,"—or their successors, will not "dissolve" quite so soon as the writers alluded to have suggested, and that ages to come may be safely counted on when various objects now comparatively juvenile will have passed into the category of age. To our successors, then, the legacy of observation and record is bequeathed, to mark and set down what is curious in their day, as done here for their example.

The history of the settlement of the Chace from the

earliest Forest times to the present day might form the subject of an interesting paper, but can at present only be glanced at. Who were the people whose chieftain was buried on the summit of the Worcestershire Beacon, and whose rude earthenware cup was found with his bones by the ordnance surveyors some few years ago?* No answer can be given to this question, and we only know that the Britons of post-Romano times were chased from the Malvern country into Wales by the Saxons under King Athelstan. Then came the division of the Forest into parishes, and the erection of small churches by the Saxon thanes or Norman soldiers, who obtained grants of certain portions of land. Cottages for labourers would have to be erected, and when the Earls of Gloucester became seated at Hanley, their verdurers, retainers, and workmen would have to be accommodated with houses for their families. Assart land was cultivated within the forest, and accommodation for men and horses as well as oxen required, and by degrees tenants rose to some degree of freedom as cultivation progressed, and the rights of common arose to those who originally held only of the lord and did him suit and service. Going on at the same time were ecclesiastical claims, and as before noticed, even an Earl could not make a boundary to his hunting grounds without license from the church. Priors obtained grants of land to support their establishments, and on the lands thus obtained men under various names would have to be placed to do rural work

* As future enquiry may be made as to this ancient British cup, and the bones among which it was found, it may be well to refer to the detailed account given in Mr. Jabez Allies's "British, Roman, and Saxon Antiquities of Worcestershire," 8vo, pp. 165-6, where there is an accurate engraving of the cup. It still remains in my possession (1870), but the fragmentary bones found with the cup, which had been subjected to cremation, and were undoubtedly human, were entrusted to Dr. Grindrod, of Townsend House, Malvern, to take for exhibition to London, and the doctor having, as he states, mislaid the bones, they are at present disunited from the cup, which they ought not to be. Shakspeare or his executors caused a denunciation to be penned against anyone moving *his* bones, and perhaps Caradoc, or whatever Briton it was who was laid to rest on the Beacon, may some day rise up to reclaim the relics which the doctor has unwarily stowed away.

and gather in the crops, and barns be erected to store them. More proprietors at length appeared, mills were wanted for grinding corn, and granaries to stow it in, and thus population increased, and certain rights were gained by long usage. An irregular period must have followed the confiscation of the Warwick property under semblance of law to the Crown; and no doubt in the interval between the acquisition of the Chace by Henry VII. and the sale of the rights of the Crown by Charles I., all sorts of pillage had been going on, squatters had got upon the waste soil, and commoners had made havoc with the timber. Thus when the Chace was proposed to be enclosed, a population had arisen sufficient to make a riot; and to "quiet the country" thus roused into rebellion, the King, though nominally lord of the soil of the whole Chace, yet agreed to relinquish two-thirds to the commoners. The deer that had been so long under the cognizance of the foresters and verdurers, were then no doubt hunted down and killed, or if any lingered on in hazel copses or ferny hollows, they would be soon found out, the neighbourhood be quickly roused, and—

"This day a stag must die,"

would be uttered by all the lusty yeomen and commoners that by the sound of the yet unforgotten horn could be assembled together for a sport soon to be entirely done away with in the Chace. Or perchance caitiff prowlers might spy the horns of some hart protruding from a thicket of brambles, and watching the place slaughter the poor animal as the dusk of evening set in, ready enough to kill their quarry, though not with the moralising humanity of the ducal hunter in the Forest of Arden, as intimated by Shakspeare—

"Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools,
Being native burghers of this desert city,
Should in their own confines, with forked arrows,
Have their round haunches gor'd."

During the lawless and unsettled times of the Civil Wars, when Royalists and Parliamentarians contended with each other, the last of the deer were doubtless destroyed. By the terms of the decree by which Malvern Chace was disafforested (and confirmed by Act of Parliament, 16th of Charles II.), the "other two-thirds" that the King gave up was "to be for ever left open and free for the commoners to take their common of pasture, and common of estovers therein, as before they had been accustomed; and that no mean lords of manors, or other freeholders, should enclose any part of the same, or fell any woods or trees growing thereon, whereby the commons might be hindered of their estovers." Nevertheless this provision as to reserved woods and trees was so little attended to, that at the close of the last century, and to a considerable extent after the beginning of the present, it might truly have been said—

> "A vast and naked plain extends to view,
> Where trees unnumber'd in past ages grew,
> The green retreat of wood-nymphs—but each oak
> Long since has yielded to the woodman's stroke."

For Hanley Castle parish was enclosed under a Special Enclosure Act, and Welland and Longdon have since taken advantage of the General Enclosure Act, so that the "naked plain" of the past forest times has become something like a surveyor's map by the numerous fields into which it has been divided. But independent of this legal enclosure of the Chace, systematic encroachments have taken place in modern times certainly not in accordance with the letter and spirit of the decree by which the Chace was disafforested, and inimical to the rights of the commoners in general had they contended for them, since by the decree "no mean lords of manors or other freeholders should enclose any part of the same, or fell any woods or trees growing thereon." It is only in general terms that "mean lords of manors" are mentioned, and none are recognised as having

rights superior to those of any other commoners. However, it is to the advantage of the general public and the increase of Great Malvern from a village to a town, that the decree has been by the commoners left to be inoperative, and thus the waste has been encroached upon, and villas built on all sides, chiefly under leases granted by manorial pretension or colour of right to do so. Thus the Chace has been rapidly narrowed, an increased and increasing population has covered the ground, and fanciful structures have so quickly risen up since Dr. Wilson brought in the water system, and Dr. Gully enlarged it, that only in the lessened green expanse called Malvern Common, and the undulating waste between Great Malvern and the Link, the Chace except in name has almost ceased to exist.* The great iron lines of modern progress now intersect the Chace between Worcester and Malvern and between Malvern and Upton-upon-Severn, everywhere new houses are rising up, and the thatched cottages of olden days only remain in some out-of-the-way nook like the withered stalk of a plant from which vitality has departed. Still, however, it may be hoped that every green lane and open common will not be appropriated, that a few green slopes may be left around Great Malvern, and the beauteous hills at any rate remain in the grassy and mossy investiture they have derived from the careless but graceful hand of Nature.

* The Old or more properly *Wold* Hills, undulating turfy heights intervening between Powick and Hanley, on the road to Upton-on-Severn, are also as yet unenclosed, and pleasingly break the level country between the Malvern range and the Severn. They consist of Keüper marl with a slight gravelly covering in places, and are elevated about 350 feet above the Severn. They were probably bare of wood in forest times, but are now tufted with planted firs and other trees, while their sides are overgrown with gorse (*Ulex Europœus*), most probably of late introduction.

Addendum.—Lime Trees, &c.—Since the account of the Brownsend and other Lime trees at Bromsberrow was sent to press, I have received a letter from the Rev. R. P. Hill, the assiduous and worthy hon. secretary to the Malvern Field Club, in answer to my inquiries as to the trees, but no very specific information is attainable. He says—"I have inquired of every one likely to tell me, but cannot get any information as to when or by whom the various Lime trees were planted. I have heard they were planted as mile-posts from the North-East end of Bromsberrow to Newent. Certainly a tree is standing at the North-East boundary of Bromsberrow, which a few years ago was in the open road (it is now enclosed.) From this tree to the Brownsend Lime is about a mile, and from the Brownsend to Hancock's, the blacksmith's, where there is also a lime tree, is about another mile. From Hancock's to the Ryton lime tree a mile further on is marked, and from thence to Newent is about four miles, and in this interval two trees are now wanting; but a mile before reaching Newent there is another lime tree, still standing. One is said also to have formerly stood at Bottom Green, two miles from Newent." This idea of *mile-trees* is a very good one, though I am not aware where else it has been followed, but that there should be no remembrance when or by whom this planting of lime trees to mark the distance to the traveller occurred, is rather strange. Mr. Hill further states, that the field in which the great inosculated limes stand, previously mentioned, and of which a wood-cut is given, is in the parish of Bromsberrow, and belonging to Osman Ricardo, Esq., of Bromsberrow Court; so that as these large limes must have been planted by some former possessor of Bromsberrow, it seems probable that the mile-trees were also designed by the same lover of arboriculture. Had former rectors of Bromsberrow written the natural history of their parish like White of Selborne, the date of the planting of these

lime trees might have been known, as well as other curious matters, while as it is conjecture can only be employed. Sir James Smith, in his "English Flora," intimates that the French adopted the lime for ornamental plantations in the reign of Louis XIV. "It generally composes," he says, "the avenues about the residences of the French as well as English gentry of that date, and Fenelon, in conformity to this taste, decorates with flowery lime trees his enchanted Isle of Calypso." The lime, it must be observed, is a fast-growing tree, and therefore attains a large size much quicker than an oak, or even an elm. The taste for lime-tree planting came in with William III., and the Brownsend lime, if planted in his reign, cannot be quite 200 years old. The larger trees at Bromsberrow that have inosculated are probably of older date, but a very large lime tree in Switzerland, known to have been planted after the battle of Morat, does not much exceed an age of four centuries. The mere size of a tree independent of its constitution and the soil and aspect where it grows is no test of its age, and I have known elms of great size when examined by their annual rings of growth to be much younger than they were supposed to be. I have examined felled yew trees of a century old that were less than a foot in diameter, while elms and limes of the same age would be more than double that bulk. Great mistakes may therefore be made as to the age of trees unless a section can be obtained of either the tree itself or one approximately of the same size and appearance in a similar soil. But hollow trees of great size and age, known either as boundary or gospel trees, and thus remembered from generation to generation by some familiar name, there can be no mistake about. These seen by the young, and discoursed about by the old, dwell in the memory, and carry the mind back to former times and customs that have passed away hundreds of years, and still the eye of the present

Bushley, was church property before King Edward I. assigned the Forest of Malvern to Earl Gilbert de Clare. The statement of Hemingus shows the superstitious devotion then commonly practised to ensure, as it was thought, a safe position in the eternal world. In the reign of William the Conqueror, a knightly landed proprietor, who probably for his military services had obtained a grant of Pendock from the Crown, for his name is said to have been *Normannus* or *Norman,* offered his lands in Pendock, which appear to have comprised the whole parish, at the altar of St. Mary's in Worcester, *together with his son,* to serve God perpetually in monastic discipline. Hemingus says that Pendock had formerly been in possession of the monastery, but had been taken away, and Norman having become possessed of it, felt it his duty to restore it.

"MANOR OF GREAT MALVERN."—Dr. Nash has asserted that while the Chace was in possession of the Crown, Queen Elizabeth made a grant of the Manor of Great Malvern to Sir Thomas Bromley, Chancellor of England, whose representative sold it to Thomas, Lord Foley, about 1740; and Lady Emily Foley is the present "Lady of the Manor." But in the decree of disafforestation, no reservation is made of any manorial claims, and the right in the waste land of the Chace which by the Act of Charles II. was never to be enclosed, rests with the freeholders and commoners generally.

With regard to the representations of remarkable trees delineated, they have been all carefully drawn on the wood from original faithful sketches, and in this my friend Professor Buckman (formerly of the Royal Agricultural College, now of Bradford-Abbas, Dorset, and an hon. member of the Club), ever zealous in the cause of every department of Natural History, has kindly and efficiently given me his welcome aid.

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FINAL DENDROLOGICAL NOTE.

Landed proprietors and occupiers of land are so continually felling timber, or hacking Pollard trees, that the arboreal features of a country are every year changing, and sometimes woods are entirely grubbed up. Thus it is that old memorial trees that had continued land-marks for ages are removed from the scene, and memory is left at fault. Two of the trees depicted in this paper, the old Elm at Powick, and the conjoined Willows at Bransford, have been destroyed. Willows, indeed, unless reduced to stumps, have little chance of a protracted existence, being so easily upset by furious gales of wind; and this is also the case with Apple trees in orchards, that are often thrown upon their knees and seldom maintain a long life, though some old native Crabs, unvalued and uncared for, may be found in secluded spots.

The Yew and the Oak take the first rank as long-enduring trees, and the Holly may equal them in longevity, though no very large ones occur in the Malvern woods. Many old Maples exist in the Malvern country, for it is a tree seldom felled, though hacked in pollard ugliness by the farmer without remorse. The Wytch Elm when unlopped is a beautiful tree, and if unmolested would maintain its position for centuries; but by hacking a monstrous head is produced, and if in the hedgerow it is at last upset. But few very old Ash trees remain in the Chace, for the Ash more than any other tree is attacked by boring insects, and thus becomes in a rotten state, and dies.

It is deserving of notice that on the banks of many of the streams that water the country once included in the Malvern Chace, there are old battered Pollard trees of the indigenous Black Poplar *(Populus nigra)*, which seems to be worn out, as no young trees are any where apparent, though the Italian Black Poplar flourishes wherever it is planted. Very few trees of the Service *(Pyrus torminalis)* now remain of any size, and its growth is so slow that though it occurs sparingly in most of the woods the trees are very slender, yet when of considerable age it is a handsome tree, and its numerous white corymbose flowers are very ornamental.

The Sycamore being a late introduction has no very large trees to show, and neither the Beech or the Hornbeam are native to Malvern Chace or any part of Worcestershire.

August, 1877.

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